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THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

AUTHORISED EDITION.

FOURTH SERIES,

Commencing with the Third Session of the Twenty-sixth Parliament
of the
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

60 VICTORIÆ.

VOLUME XLVII.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM
THE FIFTH DAY OF MARCH
TO
THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF MARCH
1897.

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Amendment proposed, in Sub-section (3) after the word "managers," to insert the words "and parents of the scholars using the school and."—*(Mr. Lloyd Morgan)* 684

Question put, "That these words be there inserted." The Committee divided :—Ayes, 109 ; Noes, 250.—(Division List, No. 99) ... 694

Amendment proposed, in Sub-section (3), after the word "managers," to insert the words "and of the teachers of the said schools."—*(Mr. Perks)* 694

Question put, "That those words be there inserted." The Committee divided :—Ayes, 126 ; Noes, 266.—(Division List, No. 100) ... 710

Amendment proposed in Sub-section (3) after the word "managers," to insert the words "consisting as to not less than one-half of persons not Clerks in Holy Orders."—*(Mr. Griffith)* 710

First Lord of the Treasury claimed to move, "That the Question be now put." 715

Question put, "That the Question be now put." The Committee divided :—Ayes, 223 ; Noes, 85.—(Division List, No. 101) ... 715

Question put accordingly, "That those words be there inserted." The Committee divided :—Ayes, 87 ; Noes, 225.—(Division List, No. 102) 715

First Lord of the Treasury claimed to move, "That the Question, 'That the words "as are" stand part of the clause' be now put" ... 716

Question put, "That the Question 'That the words "as are" stand part of the clause' be now put."—The Committee divided :—Ayes, 221 ; Noes, 83.—(Division List, No. 103) 716

Question put accordingly, "That the words 'as are' stand part of the clause." The Committee divided :—Ayes, 219 ; Noes, 77.—(Division List, No. 104) 716

Amendment proposed, in Sub-section (3) to leave out the words "approved by the Education Department," and insert the words, "prescribed by schemes made by the Education Department and published and laid before Parliament in the manner hereinafter provided."—*(Mr. Asquith)* 716

First Lord of the Treasury claimed to move, "That the Question be now put." The Committee divided :—Ayes, 249 ; Noes, 101.—(Division List, No. 105) 737

Question put accordingly, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause." The Committee divided :—Ayes, 256 ; Noes, 103.—(Division List, No. 106)... 737

First Lord of the Treasury moved "That the words of the clause down to the word 'at' in line 19—['(*a*) a share of the aid grant to be computed according to the number of scholars in the schools of the association at']—stand part of the clause" 737

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Question put, "That the Question 'That the words of the clause to the word "at," in line 19, stand part of the clause,' be now put." The Committee divided:—Ayes, 256; Noes, 102.—(Division List, No. 107) 737

Question put accordingly, "That the words of the clause to the word 'at,' in line 19, stand part of the clause." The Committee divided:—Ayes, 260; Noes, 97.—(Division List, No. 108) ... 738

Amendment proposed, in paragraph (*a*) Sub-section (3), after the word "association," to insert the words "and to the needs of the association"—*(Mr. Dillon)* 738

Committee report progress; to sit again To-morrow 740

Military Works (Money) Bill:—Committee deferred 741

SUPPLY [12th March].—Resolution reported:—

"That 100,050 men and boys be employed for the Sea and Coast-Guard Services for the year ending on the 31st day of March 1898, including 17,005 Royal Marines"—Agreed to 741

Army (Annual) Bill:—Presented, and Read the First time—(161) 741

Foreign Prison-made Goods Bill:—Second Reading deferred 741

Military Lands Act (1892) Amendment Bill:—Committee deferred 741

Kingstown Harbour Roads Transfer Bill:—Second Reading deferred 741

Law of Evidence (Criminal Cases) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 742

Trusts (Scotland) Bill:—As amended, considered: to be Read the Third time to-morrow 742

Local Government (Aldershot and Farnborough) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 742

SUPPLY:—Committee deferred 742

WAYS AND MEANS:—Committee deferred 742

Archdeaconry of Cornwall Bill:—Second Reading deferred 742

Steam Engines and Boilers (Persons in Charge) Bill:—Adjourned Debate on Motion for Committal to Standing Committee on Trade, &c. [17th February] further adjourned 742

Locomotives on Highways Bill:—Second Reading deferred 742

Assistant County Surveyors (Ireland) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 742

Archdeaconry of London (Additional Endowments) Bill:—Adjourned Debate on Second Reading [24th February] further adjourned 742

Poor Law Officers' Superannuation Act (1896) Amendment Bill:—Second Reading deferred 743

Poor Law Officers' Superannuation (Ireland) Bill:—Second Reading deferred ... 743

Leaseholders (Purchase of Fee Simple) (No. 2) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 743

Coroners' Inquests (Railway Fatalities) Bill:—Second Reading deferred ... 743

Local Government Act (1894) Amendment Bill:—Second Reading deferred ... 743

Tenant Right in Towns (Ireland) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 743

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MOTIONS.

Town Holdings (Tenants' Compensation) Bill :—To give Compensation to occupying Tenants of Town Holdings for beneficial improvements, presented and Read the First time—(159) 744

Quarter Session Jurors (Ireland) Bill :—To provide for the relief of Jurors from unnecessary attendance at Courts of Quarter Session in Ireland ; presented, and Read the First time—(160) 744

Voluntary Schools Bill :—

First Lord of the Treasury gave notice that To-morrow he would move the suspension of the Twelve o'clock Rule 744

LORDS: TUESDAY, 16TH MARCH 1897.

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RESERVE AND DISCHARGED SOLDIERS :—*(Mr. Brookfield)* 746

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HORSE AND FIELD BATTERIES—Questions, Sir C. Dilke and Major Rasch ; Answers, Under Secretary for War 747
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ALDERSHOT MILITARY PRISON—Question, Mr. Pickersgill ; Answer, Home Secretary 749
PROCESSES FOR RENT (Co. GALWAY)—Questions, Mr. Kilbride and Mr. O'Malley ; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 749
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PAUPER SOLDIERS—Question, Sir J. Leng; Answer, Financial Secretary to the War Office 752
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LAND SUB-COMMISSIONERS (OMAGH)—Question, Mr. Macaleese; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 753
DARTMOOR CONVICT PRISON—Question, Mr. Pickersgill; Answer, Home Secretary 753
NATIONAL TELEPHONE COMPANY—Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 753
INDIAN FAMINE—Question, Sir J. Kennaway; Answer, Secretary of State for India 754
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GOVERNMENT OFFICES (APPROPRIATION OF SITES)—Question, Sir H. Fowler; Answer, First Commissioner of Works 755
POST OFFICE (FEMALE TELEGRAPH LEARNERS)—Question, Mr. Macaleese; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 756
COUNTY COURT JUDGESHIP (CO. DOWN)—Questions, Mr. Patrick O'Brien; Answers, Chief Secretary for Ireland 756
WICKLOW PIER—Question, Mr. Carew; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 757
ARMY REGULATIONS (BANDSMEN)—Question, Mr. Woods; Answer, Under Secretary for War 758
BETTING HOUSE ACT (HAWKE *v.* DUNN)—Question, Sir Wilfrid Lawson; Answer, Home Secretary 758
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EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY ACT (EAST LANCASHIRE PAPER MILL COMPANY)—Question, Colonel Mellor; Answer, Home Secretary 768

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CAMERONIANS (SCOTTISH RIFLES) DISBANDMENT—[MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT]:—

Mr. John Wilson obtained leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely,—

"The Order of the War Office for the disbandment of the 5th Volunteer Battalion —the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles)—with headquarters at Airdrie, and the refusal of the War Office either to recall that Order or to grant an Inquiry into the whole circumstances" 769

Mr. Colville ... ... 773 *Under Secretary for War* 774
[*Mr. Speaker* ... ... 769, 773] *Mr. Holburn* 781

Question, "That this House do now adjourn," put and negatived ... 782

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE (EXEMPTION FROM THE STANDING ORDER):—

Motion made,—

"That the proceedings on the Voluntary Schools Bill, if under discussion at Twelve o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order Sittings of the House."—*(First Lord of the Treasury)* 782

The House divided:—Ayes, 285; Noes, 110.—(Division List, No. 109) 782

MOTIONS.

Mersey Channels Bill:—To make Rules for preventing collisions in the sea channels leading to the River Mersey; Presented and read the First time.—(162) 783

Accountants Bill:—To complete the organisation of the profession of Accountant throughout the United Kingdom; presented and read the First time.—(163) ... 783

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Voluntary Schools Bill:—Considered in Committee. [Progress, 15th March.—TENTH DAY].

Clause 1,—(Aid Grant to Voluntary Elementary Schools) 783

Amendment proposed, in paragraph (*a*), Sub-section (3), after the word "Association," to insert the words "And to the needs of the association."—*(Mr. Dillon).* Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."—Debate resumed 784

Question put. The Committee divided:—Ayes, 43; Noes, 350.—(Division List, No. 110) 792

Amendment proposed, in paragraph (*a*), Sub section (3) to leave out the word "five," and to insert the word "four."—(*Mr. Samuel Evans*) 792

Amendment withdrawn 793

Amendment proposed, in paragraph (*a*), Sub-section (3), to leave out from the word "Scholar" to the end of the paragraph.—(*Mr. Herbert Roberts*)... 793

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First Lord of the Treasury claimed to move "That the Question be now put" 815

Question put, "That the Question be now put." The Committee divided:—Ayes, 190; Noes, 65.—(Division List, No. 111) ... 815

Question put accordingly, "That the words 'or, if the Department fix different rates for,' stand part of the clause."—The Committee divided:—Ayes, 183; Noes, 72.—(Division List, No. 112) 815

Amendment proposed, in paragraph (*a*), Sub-section (3), to leave out the words "Town and Country Schools," and insert the words "Districts in which rates for School Boards are levied, and those in which no such rates are levied, and for."—(*Mr. Griffith*) 815

Question put, "That the words 'Town and Country Schools' stand part of the clause." The Committee divided:—Ayes, 230; Noes, 81.—(Division List, No. 113) 821

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "rates," in paragraph (*a*) to the end of paragraph (*b*), Sub-section (3).—(*Mr. Samuel Evans*) 821

First Lord of the Treasury claimed to move, "That the Question be put" 828

Question put, "That the Question be now put."—The Committee divided:—Ayes, 268; Noes, 100.—(Division List, No. 114) ... 828

Question put accordingly, "That paragraph (*b*) of Sub-section (3) stand part of the clause."—The Committee divided:—Ayes, 273; Noes, 102.—(Division List, No. 115) 829

First Lord of the Treasury moved, "That the Question, 'That the words of the clause down to the word "The," in page 2, line 4, stand part of the clause,' be now put" 829

Question put, "That the Question, 'That the words of the clause down to the word "The," in page 2, line 4, stand part of the clause,' be now put." The Committee divided:—Ayes, 263; Noes, 96.—(Division List, No. 116) 829

Question put accordingly, "That the words of the clause down to the word 'The,' in page 2, line 4, stand part of the clause."—The Committee divided:—Ayes, 263; Noes, 94.—(Division List, No. 117) 829

Motion made, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. J. Morley*) 829

First Lord of the Treasury moved, "That the Question be now put" ... 835

Question put, "That the Question be now put."—The Committee divided:—Ayes, 232; Noes, 83.—(Division List, No. 118) ... 835

Question put accordingly, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—The Committee divided:—Ayes, 81; Noes, 233.—(Division List, No. 119.) 835

Amendment proposed, to leave out Sub-section (5).—(*Mr. Nussey*) ... 835

Question put, "That the words of the sub-section down to the word 'or,' in line 6, stand part of the clause" 850

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 188; Noes 59.—(Division List, No. 120) 851

First Lord of the Treasury moved "That the Question 'That the words of the clause down to the word "The," in page 2, line 11, stand part of the clause,' be now put" 851

Question put, "That the Question 'That the words of the clause down to the word "The," in page 2, line 11, stand part of the clause,' be now put." The Committee divided:—Ayes, 188; Noes, 52.—(Division List, No. 121) 851

Question put accordingly, "That the words of the clause down to the word 'The,' in page 2, line 11, stand part of the clause."—The Committee divided:—Ayes, 186; Noes, 51.—(Division List, No. 122) 851

Progress reported; Committee to sit again To-morrow 851

MUSEUM GRANTS:—Select Committee on Museum Grants 851

Registration of Parliamentary Voters Bill:—Second Reading deferred ... 851

Married Persons' Small Industrial Incomes (Tax Relief) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 852

Metropolitan and other Police Courts Bill:—Second Reading deferred ... 852

Truck Acts Amendment Bill:—Second Reading deferred 852

Trusts (Scotland) Bill:—Third Reading deferred 852

Poor Law Officers' Superannuation Act (1896) Amendment Bill:—Second Reading deferred 852

Licences (Ireland) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 852

Licensing Exemption (Houses of Parliament) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 852

COMMONS: WEDNESDAY, 17TH MARCH 1897.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Voluntary Schools Bill:—Considered in Committee—[Progress, 16th March - ELEVENTH DAY] 853

Clause 1,—(Aid Grant to Voluntary Elementary Schools) 853

Amendment proposed, to leave out Sub-section (6) for the purpose of inserting the following Sub-section:—

(6) "The accounts of every school aided out of the aid grant shall be audited by the district auditor, and the enactments relating to audit by district auditors of the accounts of School Boards and their officers and to all matters incidental thereto and consequential thereon shall apply accordingly, with such adaptations as may be made by regulations of the Local Government Board."—*(Mr. Lloyd-George)* 854

First Lord of the Treasury claimed to move "That the Question be now put" 869

Question put, "That the Question be now put." The Committee divided:—Ayes, 217; Noes, 97.—(Division List, No. 123) ... 869

Question put accordingly, "That Sub-section (6) stand part of the clause." The Committee divided:—Ayes, 230; Noes, 100.—(Division List, No. 124) 869

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Amendment proposed, at the end of Sub-section (6) after the word "Department," to insert :—

"Provided that it shall be the duty of the auditor to disallow any payments for rent, cleaning, warming, or lighting of the school buildings, or for any of these, as are not reasonable and wholly and fairly incurred during or in connection with the use of the premises as a public elementary day school, to disallow any expenditure on salaries and wages not wholly in payment for services rendered in public elementary day schools, and to surcharge any person liable by law to be surcharged with any sum of money which is considered by the auditor to have been unreasonably or improperly so expended."—(*Mr. Yoxall*) 870

Amendment withdrawn 878

Amendment proposed, at the end of Sub-section (6) to insert the words :—

"The Education Department may appoint one of their officers to attend the meetings of the governing body of any association formed under this section, but such officer shall not have a right to vote."—(*Mr. Courtney*, on behalf of Mr. Hobhouse) 878

First Lord of the Treasury claimed to move, "That the Question be now put" 886

Question put, "That the Question be now put." The Committee divided :—Ayes, 266 ; Noes, 111.—(Division List, No. 125) ... 886

Question put accordingly, "That those words be there inserted." The Committee divided :—Ayes, 119 ; Noes, 263.—(Division List, No. 126) 886

First Lord of the Treasury claimed to move "That the Question, 'That Clause 1 stand part of the Bill,' be now put." The Committee divided :—Ayes, 259 ; Noes, 112.—(Division List, No. 127) ... 886

Question put accordingly, "That Clause 1 stand part of the Bill." The Committee divided :—Ayes, 279 ; Noes, 107.—(Division List, No. 128) 886

Clause 2,—(Repeal of 17s. 6d. limit in Section 19 of 39 and 40 Vict. c. 79, as Respects Day Schools in England and Wales) 887

Committee report Progress ; to sit again To-morrow 887

Coal Mines Regulation Bill :—Second Reading deferred 887

Access to Mountains (Scotland) Bill :—Second Reading deferred 887

Corn Sales Bill :—Second Reading deferred 887

Parish Registers Bill :—Second Reading deferred 887

Building Feus and Leases (Scotland) Bill :—Second Reading deferred ... 887

Registration of Firms Bill :—Second Reading deferred... 887

Municipal Elections (Ireland) (Women) Bill :—Second Reading deferred ... 887

Aliens Bill :—Second Reading deferred 888

Working Men's Dwellings Bill :—Second Reading deferred 888

Solicitors (Ireland) Bill :—Second Reading deferred 888

Appointment of High Sheriffs (Ireland) Bill :—Second Reading deferred ... 888

Rivers Pollution Prevention Bill :—Second Reading deferred 888

London Water Companies Amalgamation Bill :—Second Reading deferred ... 888

Tithe Redemption Bill :—Second Reading deferred 888

Solicitors (Magistracy) Bill :—Second Reading deferred 888

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SUPPLY :—Committee deferred 888

WAYS AND MEANS :—Committee deferred 888

Licensing Exemption (Houses of Parliament) Bill :—Second Reading deferred 888

ROYAL NATIONAL LIFEBOAT INSTITUTION :—Select Committee appointed to inquire into the administration of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, and into the adequacy of its organisation for saving life on our coasts.—*(Sir R. U. Penrose FitzGerald)* 888

LORDS: THURSDAY, 18TH MARCH 1897.

Isle of Man (Church Building Acts) Bill [H.L.] :—After statement by Prime Minister, Read a Second time and committed 889

Surveyors (County Dublin) Bill :—Read 2ª, and committed 890

Working Men's Dwellings Bill [H.L.] :—Amendments reported, and further Amendment made 890

Land Law (Ireland) Act 1881 :—

Duke of Abercorn ...	890	*Earl of Erne*	907
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COMMONS: THURSDAY, 18TH MARCH 1897.

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POLICE PROTECTION (CO. CAVAN)—Questions, Mr. Farrell; Answers, Chief Secretary for Ireland 914

PRISON VISITING COMMITTEES (ANNUAL CONFERENCE)—Question, Mr. Pickersgill; Answer, Home Secretary 915

PRISON WARDERS (PUNISHMENT)—Question, Mr. Pickersgill; Answer, Home Secretary 915

HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS COMMISSION—Question, Mr. Stanley Leighton; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 916

VOLUNTEER OFFICERS' EXAMINATION—Question, Mr. Herbert Roberts; Answer, Under Secretary of State for War 916

GOVERNMENT PROPERTY (RATING)—Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 917

AUGHNACLOY BURGESS LIST—Question, Mr. Macaleese; Answer, Attorney General for Ireland... 917

EDUCATION CODE—Questions, Mr. Sharpe; Answers, Vice President of the Council 918

BOARD SCHOOLS (LONDON)—Question, Mr. Sharpe; Answer, Vice President of the Council 919

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FAIR RENT APPLICATIONS (IRELAND)—Questions, Mr. Farrell, Mr. Carson, Mr. Flynn, Dr. Ambrose, Mr. Dillon, and Mr. Daly; Answers, Chief Secretary for Ireland 919

ARMY (SPECIAL CAMPAIGN PENSION)—Question, Captain Norton; Answer, Under Secretary for War 923

QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE (CRIMEAN VETERANS)—Questions, Captain Norton and Sir J. Leng; Answers, Under Secretary for War and First Lord of the Admiralty 923

WHITE ESTATE (CO. CORK)—Question, Mr. Gilhooly; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 924

TRAWLING IN BANTRY BAY—Question, Mr. Gilhooly; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 924

TELEGRAPH FACILITIES (GOVAN)—Question, Mr. Caldwell; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 924

EMBEZZLEMENT (ALLEGED) KILMARNOCK—Question, Sir Wm. Wedderburn; Answer, Lord Advocate 925

ROYAL PATRIOTIC FUND—Questions, Mr. Kearley; Answers, Under Secretary for War 926

GUARDS' BANDS—Questions, Captain Bagot; Answer, Under Secretary for War 926

RAILWAY TRUCKS (LABELLING)—Question, Sir C. Dilke; Answer, President of the Board of Trade 927

LAND VALUATION (IRELAND)—Question, Mr. Farrell; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 927

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY FORCE FUND—Question, Mr. Farrell; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland... 928

UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES (GOVERNMENT GRANT)—Questions, Mr. Birrell and Sir J. Leng; Answers, Secretary to the Treasury 928

SOUTH AFRICA (IMPORTATION OF WARLIKE STORES)—Questions, Mr. Duncombe and Mr. Paulton; Answer, Secretary of State for the Colonies 929

NATIONAL BOARD (IRELAND)—Questions, Mr. Patrick O'Brien, Mr. Harrington, and Mr. Johnston; Answers, Chief Secretary for Ireland... 930

LADIES' CARRIAGES—Question, Mr. Bigwood; Answer, President of the Board of Trade 931

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POST OFFICE (CLONMEL)—Question, Mr. Condon; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 935

IRISH MAIL SERVICE—Questions, Mr. Murnaghan, Mr. Flavin, and Captain Donelan; Answers, Secretary to the Treasury 936

CONGESTED AREAS (IRELAND)—Question, Mr. John Roche; Answers, Chief Secretary for Ireland 937

WATER SUPPLY (PUNJAB)—Question, Sir Herbert Maxwell; Answer, Secretary of State for India 938

EXPORTS OF COAL, CINDERS, AND PATENT FUEL—Question, Mr. Mundella; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury... 938

COALING STATION (LOUGH SWILLY)—Question, Mr. T. B. Curran; Answer, First Lord of the Admiralty 939

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BRITISH TROOPS IN INDIA (HEALTH)—Questions, Captain Norton and Major Rasch; Answers, Secretary of State for India and First Lord of the Treasury... 940

HULME CAVALRY BARRACKS (MANCHESTER)—Question, Mr. Galloway; Answer, Under Secretary for War... 940

NORWOOD-UNDER-SOUTHALL (POSTAL DISTRICT)—Question, Mr. Bigwood; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 940

METROPOLITAN POLICE (HACKNEY CARRIAGE DEPARTMENT)—Question, Captain Norton; Answer, Home Secretary 941

POOR LAW AND MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE (IRELAND)—Question, Mr. Harrington; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 941

QUEEN'S YACHT "VICTORIA AND ALBERT"—Question, Sir E. Gourley; Answer, First Lord of the Admiralty 942

TRUCK ACT—Question, Lord Balcarres; Answer, Home Secretary 942

RICHMOND LUNATIC ASYLUM (DUBLIN)—Questions, Mr. Carew and Mr. Carson; Answers, Chief Secretary for Ireland 943

REFORMS FOR TURKEY—Questions, Mr. Stevenson; Answers, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs 944

CRETE—Questions, Mr. Dillon, Mr. Hedderwick, Mr. Wm. Allan, Sir C. Dilke, Mr. J. Morley, and Sir Wm. Harcourt; Answers, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Under Secretary for War, and First Lord the Treasury... 944

QUEEN'S JUBILEE PROCESSION (MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT)—Question, Mr. Kearley; Answer, First Commissioner of Works... 947

TORPEDO BOATS (ROYAL NAVY)—Question, Mr. Wm. Allan; Answer, Secretary to the Admiralty... 948

MUSSEL BEDS—Question, Mr. Orr-Ewing; Answer, Lord Advocate ... 948

BETTING ON RACECOURSES—Questions, Mr. Pickersgill and Mr. Jas. Lowther; Answer, Home Secretary 948

PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS (SCOTLAND)—Question, Mr. Souttar; Answer, Lord Advocate 949

TELEPHONE EXCHANGES—Question, Mr. Provand; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 950

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS BILL—Question, Mr. Hobhouse; Answer, First Lord of the Treasury... 950

ENGINEERING TRADE DISPUTE—Question, Mr. Robertson; Answer, President of the Board of Trade 951

FINANCIAL RELATIONS COMMISSION (GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND)—Question, Mr. Dillon; Answer, First Lord of the Treasury... 951

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Voluntary Schools Bill:—Considered in Committee [Progress, 17th March.—TWELFTH DAY]

Clause 2,—(Repeal of 17s. 6d. limit in Section 19 of 39 and 40 Vict. c. 79, as respects day schools in England and Wales) 951

Amendment proposed, to substitute the words "nine hundred" for the words "eight hundred and ninety-seven."—*(Mr. Herbert Lewis)* ... 952

Amendment withdrawn 952

Question put, "That the clause stand part of the Bill." The Committee divided:—Ayes, 267; Noes, 62.—(Division List, No. 129) ... 957

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Clause 3,—(Exemption from rates of Voluntary Elementary Schools). ... 957

Amendment proposed, after the word "rate," to insert the words "other than a School Board rate."—*(Mr. Samuel Evans)*... 957

Amendment withdrawn 959

Amendment proposed, to leave out the words "or mainly."—*(Mr. Herbert Roberts)* 959

Amendment withdrawn 960

Amendment proposed, to leave out the words "except to the extent," in order to insert instead thereof the words "so long as no profit."—*(Mr. Strachey)* 960

Amendment withdrawn 962

Amendment proposed, to insert after the word "extent" the words "or the estimated money value of any advantage."—*(Mr. Lewis)* ... 962

Amendment withdrawn 962

Question put, "That the clause stand part of the Bill." The Committee divided:—Ayes, 283; Noes, 88.—(Division List, No. 130) ... 968

Clause 4,—(Definitions) 969

Amendment proposed.—*(Mr. J. A. Pease)* 969

Amendment negatived; clause ordered to stand part of the Bill ... 970

Clause 5,—(Extent of Act and short title) 970

Amendment proposed, after the word "to," to insert the word "Wales."—*(Mr. Lewis)*... 971

Question put, "That the word 'Wales' be there inserted." The Committee divided:—Ayes, 61; Noes, 198.—(Division List, No. 131) 981

Clause ordered to stand part of the Bill 983

New Clause,—(Duration of Act)—*(Mr. Lewis)* 984

Question put, "That the clause be read a Second time." The Committee divided:—Ayes, 63; Noes, 198.—(Division List, No. 132) ... 987

New Clause,—(Endowed schools)—*(Mr. Bryce)* 987

Clause withdrawn 991

New Clause,—(Reports to Parliament)—*(Sir H. Fowler)*—Withdrawn ... 991

New Clause,—(Meetings of governing bodies to be open)—*(Mr. Griffith)* 991

Clause negatived 992

New Clause,—(Duties of Teachers)—*(Mr. Logan)*... 993

Motion made, and Question put, "That the clause be read a Second time." The Committee divided:—Ayes, 96; Noes, 237.—(Division List, No. 133) 1000

Bill reported, without Amendment; to be read the Third time on Thursday, 25th March 1000

Military Works (Money) Bill:—Considered in Committee. [Progress, 22nd February] 1002

Clause 2,—(Borrowing for purposes of Act, and Accounts and Audit) ... 1002

Amendment proposed, in Sub-section (1), to leave out the words "may, if they think fit at any time," and to insert the word "shall"—*(Mr. Lough)*—Negatived 1003

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Amendment proposed, to omit from Sub-section (1) the words "all or any part of"—(*Mr. Lough*) 1003

Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause." The Committee divided:—Ayes, 186; Noes, 65.—(Division List, No. 134) 1003

Amendment proposed, in Sub-section (1) to leave out the word "*thirty*," and to insert the word "*fifteen*"—(*Mr. Kearley*) 1003

Mr. Duncombe claimed to move, "That the Question be now put," but the Chairman withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question 1004

Mr. Duncombe claimed to move "That the Question be now put" ... 1004

Question put, "That the Question be now put." The Committee divided:—Ayes, 158; Noes, 57.—(Division List, No. 135) ... 1004

Question put accordingly, "That the word '*thirty*' stand part of the clause." The Committee divided:—Ayes, 159; Noes, 56.—(Division List, No. 136) 1004

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next 1004

Public Health (Scotland) Bill:—Adjourned Debate on Second Reading [5th February] further adjourned 1005

Foreign Prison-made Goods Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1005

Military Lands Act (1892) Amendment Bill:—Committee deferred 1005

Berriew School Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1005

Kingstown Harbour Roads Transfer Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1005

Law of Evidence (Criminal Cases) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1005

Local Government (Aldershot and Farnborough) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1005

Archdeaconry of Cornwall Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1005

Army (Annual) Bill:—After short Debate, Read a Second time and Committed ... 1005

Trusts (Scotland) Bill:—Third Reading deferred... 1007

Sale of Food and Drugs Bill:—Second Reading deferred... 1007

County Councils (Qualificaton of Women) Bill:—Second Reading deferred ... 1007

Industrial and Provident and Incorporated Building Societies (Purchase of Fee Simple) Bill:—Second Reading deferred... 1007

Steam Engines and Boilers (Persons in Charge) Bill:—Adjourned Debate on Motion for Committal to Standing Committee on Trade, Etc. [17th February] further adjourned 1007

Poor Law Officers' Superannuation (Ireland) Bill:—Second Reading deferred... 1007

Mersey Channels Bill:—Read a Second time, and Committed 1007

Truck Acts Amendment Bill:—Second Reading deferred... 1007

Licensing Exemption (Houses of Parliament) Bill:—Second Reading deferred... 1007

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE:—On the Motion, "That this House do now adjourn," First Lord of the Treasury gave notice that to-morrow he would move the suspension of the Twelve o'Clock Rule for financial business 1007

MUSEUMS OF THE SCIENCE AND ART DEPARTMENT:—Select Committee ... 1008

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LORDS: FRIDAY, 19TH MARCH 1897.

INTEGRITY OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE.—(SPEECH BY LORD KIMBERLEY AT NORWICH):—
Prime Minister ... ... 1009 *Earl of Kimberley* 1014

Isle of Man (Church Building Acts) Bill [H.L.]:—Considered in Committee, reported without Amendment; Standing Committee negatived 1019

Surveyors (County Dublin) Bill:—Considered in Committee, reported without Amendment; Standing Committee negatived 1019

Working Men's Dwellings Bill [H.L.]:—Read 3ª; Amendments made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons 1019

COMMONS: FRIDAY, 19TH MARCH 1897.

QUESTIONS.

PRISONS (PHYSICAL DRILL)—Question, Mr. Pickersgill; Answer, Home Secretary 1020
PRISONS (VISITING COMMITTEES)—Question, Mr. Pickersgill; Answer, Home Secretary 1020
TELEPHONE WIRE (LONDON)—Questions, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answers, Secretary to the Treasury 1021
LAND TAX—Question, Colonel Milward; Answer, Chancellor of the Exchequer 1021
OPHTHALMIA PATIENTS—Questions, Dr. Farquharson and Mr. Mundella; Answers, Secretary to the Local Government Board 1022
ROAD CONSTRUCTION (IRELAND)—Question, Mr. J. Roche; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1023
DISTRESS (CO. MAYO)—Question, Mr. M. Davitt; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1024
FACTORY ACT PROSECUTION—Question, Sir C. Dilke; Answer, Home Secretary 1025
NATIONAL TELEPHONE COMPANY—Question, Mr. Griffith-Boscawen; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 1025
IRISH MAIL SERVICE—Question, Mr. Daly; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 1026
BISHOPRIC OF ST. DAVID'S—Questions, Mr. Bryn Roberts; Answer, Home Secretary 1027
STEAMSHIP "OSBORN" (DISCHARGE OF CREW)—Question, Mr. Havelock Wilson; Answer, President of the Board of Trade 1027
STEAMSHIP "BERGNON" (DEATH OF SEAMAN)—Question, Mr. Havelock Wilson; Answer, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs 1028
STEAMSHIP "CITY OF AGRA" (WRECK)—Question, Mr. Havelock Wilson; Answer, President of the Board of Trade 1029
ARMY CONTRACTS (IRELAND)—Question, Mr. Flavin; Answer, Under Secretary for War... 1029
WICKLOW HARBOUR COMMISSIONERS—Question, Mr. Carew; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury... 1030

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SUCK DRAINAGE AWARD—Question, Mr. Kilbride; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 1031
LOAN FUND SOCIETIES (IRELAND)—Question, Dr. McDonnell; Answer, Attorney General for Ireland 1031
RENT DECREES (IRELAND)—Question, Mr. Daly; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1032
QUEENSTOWN CUSTOM HOUSE—Question, Captain Donelan; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 1032
DOGS DESTROYED (IRELAND)—Questions, Mr. Macaleese, Captain Donelan, and Mr. Carson; Answers, Chief Secretary for Ireland... 1032
LIGHT DUES (FOREIGN STATES AND BRITISH COLONIES)—Questions, Sir G. Baden-Powell; Answers, President of the Board of Trade 1033
JAMESON RAID (TRANSVAAL)—Questions, Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett; Answers, Secretary of State for the Colonies... 1034
LAND SUB-COMMISSION (OMAGH)—Questions, Mr. Murnaghan and Mr. Carson; Answers, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1035
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING (POLL)—Question, Mr. Luttrell; Answer, Secretary to the Local Government Board 1036
PUBLIC WORKS (WEST COAST OF SCOTLAND)—Question, Mr. Hedderwick; Answer, First Lord of the Treasury 1036
SUPPLY (IRISH LAND COMMISSION)—Questions, Mr. Carson and Mr. Flynn; Answer, First Lord of the Treasury 1036
CRETE—Questions, Mr. Dillon; Answer, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs 1037

SITTING OF THE HOUSE (EXEMPTION OF STANDING ORDER):—First Lord of the Treasury moved, "That the Business of Supply, if under discussion at Twelve o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order Sittings of the House."—The House divided:—Ayes, 164; Noes, 56.—(Division List, No. 137) 1037

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY:—Considered in Committee.

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1897–8.

1. £4,696,000, expenses of wages, etc., to officers, seamen, and boys, coastguards, and Royal Marines 1038
Amendment proposed, to reduce the Vote by £279,545—(*Mr. Lough*)... 1053
Amendment withdrawn 1056
Original Question put, and agreed to 1058

ARMY, 1896–97.

2. £100, Ordnance Factories (Supplementary).—Agreed to 1058

CIVIL SERVICES (EXCESS) 1895–96.

3. £263 4s. 1d., Mint, including Coinage.—Agreed to 1058

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NAVY ESTIMATES, 1897–98.

4. £648,800, Works, Buildings, and Repairs, at home and abroad.—Agreed to 1059

5. £1,384,600, Victualling and Clothing for the Navy 1059
Vote agreed to 1062

6. £161,400 Medical Establishments and Services.—Agreed to ... 1062

7. £10,600 Martial Law 1062
Vote agreed to 1064

8. £249,900, Royal Naval Reserves 1064
Vote agreed to 1075

9. £2,675,000 Naval Armaments 1075
Vote agreed to 1076

10. £195,400, Miscellaneous Effective Services.—Agreed to 1076

11. £243,600, Admiralty Office.—Agreed to 1076

12. £749,500, Half Pay, Reserved, and Retired Pay.—Agreed to ... 1076

13. £1,053,200, Naval and Marine Pensions, Gratuities, and Compassionate Allowances.—Agreed to 1076

14. £327,400, Civil Pensions and Gratuities.—Agreed to 1076

15. £60,300, Additional Naval Force for Service in Australasian Waters.—Agreed to 1076

Resolutions to be reported upon Monday next 1076

WAYS AND MEANS:—Considered in Committee.—Resolutions Agreed to ... 1076

Army (Annual) Bill:—Considered in Committee, and Reported, without Amendment. Read the Third time, and passed 1076

House counted out 1076

LORDS: MONDAY, 22ND MARCH 1897.

EARL OF NORMANTON:—Report from Lord Chancellor 1077

Isle of Man (Church Building Acts) Bill [H.L.]:—Read 3ª, passed, and sent to the Commons 1077

Surveyors (County Dublin) Bill:—Read 3ª and passed 1077

Army (Annual) Bill:—Read 1ª—[No. 34]... 1077

COMMONS: MONDAY, 22ND MARCH 1897.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

City of London (Inclusion of Southwark) Bill:—Motion made, "That the Bill be now read a Second time" 1077

Mr. Causton 1077
[*Mr. Speaker* ... ...1078]

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Pickersgill*) 1079

Mr. Lafone 1082
Sir E. Clarke... 1084

Mr. Lafone claimed to move, "That the Question be now put," but Mr. Speaker withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.—Debate resumed 1090

Mr. Boulnois 1090
Captain Norton 1091
Mr. Macdona 1092
Mr. Haldane 1093
Sir J. B. Maple 1095
Secretary, Local Government Board 1096
Mr. Courtney 1097
Mr A. Gibbs 1098
Mr. Buxton 1099

Mr. Cohen claimed to move, "That the Question be now put," but Mr. Speaker withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.—Debate resumed 1100

Mr Clough 1100
Mr. Lowles 1101
Sir C. Dilke 1101
President, Local Government Board 1102
Mr. Stuart 1103
Mr. Bartley 1103

Question put. The House divided:—Ayes, 169; Noes, 187.—(Division List, No. 138). Words added. Main Question, as amended, put, and Agreed to. Second Reading put off for six months 1103

QUESTIONS.

PARIS INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION—Questions, Sir Stafford Northcote; Answers, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Chancellor of the Exchequer 1104

METROPOLITAN POLICE—Questions, Mr. Pickersgill and Captain Norton; Answers, Home Secretary 1104

SCOTCH MAIL SERVICE—Questions, Mr. Nicol and Sir Leonard Lyell; Answers, Secretary to the Treasury 1106

HOUSE OF COMMONS (MEMBERS' SMOKING ACCOMMODATION)—Question, Mr. Aird; Answer, First Commissioner of Works 1107

VALUATION AND BOUNDARY SURVEY (IRELAND)—Questions, Mr. Daly; Answers, Chief Secretary for Ireland.. 1107

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Poor Law Officers (Pensions)—Question, Mr. Ashton; Answer, Secretary to the Local Government Board ... 1109
Board School Playgrounds—Question, Colonel Dalbiac; Answer, Vice President of the Council ... 1110
Contraband Tobacco (Chelsea Hospital)—Question, Captain Norton; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury ... 1111
Voluntary Schools (Religious Instruction)—Question, Sir F. Powell; Answer, Vice President of the Council ... 1111
Norfolk Island—Question, Mr. Hogan; Answer, Secretary of State for the Colonies ... 1112
Railway Accidents—Questions, Mr. Channing; Answers, President of the Board of Trade ... 1113
British New Guinea—Question, Mr. Hogan; Answer, Secretary of State for the Colonies ... 1114
Post Office (Thurles, Co. Tipperary)—Question, Mr. Hogan; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury ... 1114
Queen's Diamond Jubilee (Imperial Stamp)—Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury ... 1114
Irish Mail Service—Question, Mr. Patrick J. O'Brien; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury ... 1115
Christian Churches in India—Questions, Mr. J. H. Roberts and Mr. Carvell Williams; Answers, Secretary of State for India ... 1115
FitzGerald Estate (Co. Kerry)—Question, Mr. Flavin; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland ... 1116
London County Council (Water Supply)—Question, Sir F. Dixon-Hartland; Answer, President of the Local Government Board... ... 1116
Madagascar (British Goods)—Question, Mr. J. A. Pease; Answer, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs ... 1117
Haulbowline Dockyard—Question, Captain Donelan; Answer, Civil Lord of the Admiralty ... 1118
Crete—Questions, Mr. Stevenson, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr Hedderwick, Mr. Swift MacNeill, Mr. Dillon, and Mr. McLeod; Answers, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Under Secretary for War [Mr. Speaker] ... 1118
Hampton Court Park—Question, Mr. Skewes-Cox; Answer, First Commissioner of Works ... 1121
Irish Public Works (Supply of Furniture)—Question, Mr. Dillon; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury ... 1121
Land Commissioner (Sale of Tenancies)—Question, Mr. Knox; Answer, Attorney General for Ireland ... 1121
Clanricarde Estate (Co. Galway)—Question, Mr. John Roche; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland ... 1122
Queen's Jubilee (Yeomanry Cavalry)—Question, Major Wyndham-Quin; Answer, Under Secretary for War ... 1123
Indian Famine—Question, Mr. Buchanan; Answer, Secretary of State for India... ... 1123
Sale of Estate (Co. Cork)—Question, Mr. Gilhooly; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland ... 1124
Volunteer Artillery—Question, Sir C. Dilke; Answer, Under Secretary for War ... 1124
Aldershot (Canteens and Messes)—Question, Mr. McLeod; Answer, Under Secretary for War ... 1125
Estate Receivers (Co. Kerry)—Question, Mr. Flavin; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland ... 1125
Tunnel (Ireland and Scotland)—Question, Mr. H. O. Arnold-Forster; Answer, First Lord of the Treasury ... 1125
British Troops in India (Health)—Question, Major Rasch; Answer, First Lord of the Treasury ... 1126

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SUPPLY (SCOTTISH ESTIMATES)—Questions, Mr. McLeod; Answers, First Lord of the Treasury 1126

PUBLIC WORKS (WEST COAST OF SCOTLAND)—Question, Mr. Hedderwick; Answer, First Lord of the Treasury 1127

Market Gardeners' Compensation (Scotland) Bill :—Second Reading deferred... 1127

MOTIONS.

Dangerous Performances Bill :—To extend the age under which the employment of young persons in dangerous performances is prohibited; presented and Read the First time—(164) 1127

Public Offices (Whitehall) Site Bill :—For the acquisition of a Site for Public Offices in or near Whitehall, and for other purposes connected therewith; presented and Read the First time—(165) 1127

Voluntary Schools Bill :—Third Reading deferred 1127

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Military Works (Money) Bill :—Considered in Committee. [Progress, 22nd March]

Clause 2,—(Borrowing for purposes of Act, and accounts and audit) ... 1128

Amendment proposed, after Sub-section (1) to insert—

"Every loan raised in pursuance of this section shall be discharged before such date as may be fixed by the Treasury—*(Mr. Lough)* 1128

Amendment negatived 1129

Amendment proposed, in Sub-section (2), to leave out from the word "services" to the end of the Sub-section—(*Mr. Knox*) 1129

Amendment negatived 1130

Amendment proposed, in Sub-section (3), to omit the words "of the money expended and borrowed, and the securities created under this Act," in order to insert other words—*(Mr. Lough)* 1130

Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause." The Committee divided :—Ayes, 193; Noes, 73.—(Division List, No. 139) 1133

Question put, "That Clause 2 stand part of the Bill." The Committee divided :—Ayes, 150; Noes, 60.—(Division List, No. 140) ... 1136

Clause 3,—(Application of surplus income of year 1896–7 for expenses of scheduled work) 1136

Clause ordered to stand part of the Bill 1137

Clause 4,—(Short Title)—Ordered to stand part of the Bill 1137

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New Clause,—(Reports to Parliament)—(*Mr. Lough*) 1137

Motion made, and Question put, "That the clause be read a Second time." The Committee divided:—Ayes, 48; Noes, 137.—(Division List, No. 141) 1138

Question proposed, "That this be the Schedule of the Bill" 1139

Sir J. Fergusson claimed to move, "That the Question be now put," but the Chairman withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.—Debate resumed 1147

Question put.—The Committee divided:—Ayes, 179; Noes, 59.—(Division List, No. 142) 1149

Preamble agreed to; Bill reported, without Amendment; to be Read the Third time upon Thursday 1149

Public Health (Scotland) Bill:—Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [5th February], "That the Bill be now Read a Second time." Question again proposed.—Debate resumed

Sir W. Wedderburn ... 1150 *Sir J. Leng* 1153
[*Mr. Speaker* ... ... 1152]

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "that," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words—

"This House declines to Read a Second time a Bill to consolidate and amend the Laws relating to Public Health in Scotland which does not provide for the rates under the same being levied one-half upon the owners and the other half upon the occupiers of land in burghs as in counties; and which does not permit of the acquisition of land compulsorily for Public Health purposes by an Order of the Local Government Board of Scotland without resort to Parliament."—*(Mr. Caldwell)* 1160

Mr. Provand ... ... 1160 *Sir T. Gibson-Carmichael* ... 1161

Debate adjourned; to be resumed upon Thursday 1162

Military Lands Act (1892) Amendment Bill:—Considered in Committee. [Progress, 15th February]

Clause 1,—(Power for County or Borough Council to construct buildings and works 1162

Motion made, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Patrick M'Hugh*) 1162

Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow 1162

SUPPLY—[19th March]:—Resolutions reported.

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1897–8—

Resolutions (No. 1 to No. 10) agreed to 1163

11. "That a sum not exceeding £243,600, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the expenses of the Admiralty Office, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1898."

After short Debate, Resolution agreed to... 1164

Resolutions (No. 12 to No. 15) agreed to... 1165

WAYS AND MEANS—[19th March]:—Resolutions reported and agreed to ... 1166

Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill:—Presented and Read the First time 1166

Merchant Shipping (Undermanning) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1166

Foreign Prison Made Goods Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1166

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Berriew School Bill :—Second Reading deferred 1166

Kingstown Harbour Roads Transfer Bill :—Second Reading deferred 1166

Law of Evidence (Criminal Cases) Bill :—Second Reading deferred 1166

Local Government (Aldershot and Farnborough) Bill :—Second Reading deferred 1166

Archdeaconry of Cornwall Bill :—Second Reading deferred 1166

Trusts (Scotland) Bill :—Third Reading deferred 1166

SUPPLY :—Committee deferred 1167

WAYS AND MEANS :—Committee deferred 1167

County Courts Bill :—Second Reading deferred 1167

Poor Law Officers' Superannuation Act (1896) Amendment Bill :—Second Reading deferred 1167

Steam Engines and Boilers (Persons in Charge) Bill :—Adjourned Debate on Motion for Committal to Standing Committee on Trade, Etc. [17th February] further adjourned 1167

Plumbers' Registration Bill :—Second Reading deferred... 1167

County Councillors (Qualification of Women) (Scotland) Bill :—Second Reading deferred 1167

School Board Electorate (Scotland) Bill :—Second Reading deferred 1167

Merchant Shipping Acts Amendment Bill :—Second Reading deferred 1167

Trout Fishing Close Time (Scotland) Bill :—Second Reading deferred 1167

Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act (1886) Amendment Bill :—Second Reading deferred 1167

Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Estates Tail Bill :—Second Reading deferred ... 1167

Estates Tail Bill :—Second Reading deferred 1168

Highways Bill :—Second Reading deferred... 1168

Municipal Elections (Ireland) (Women) Bill :—Second Reading deferred ... 1168

Mersey Channels Bill :—Considered in Committee. Clause 1 :—Committee report progress 1168

Licensing Exemption (Houses of Parliament) Bill :—Second Reading deferred... 1168

MOTIONS.

Edinburgh University (Transfer of Patronage) Bill :—For transferring the right of Presentation to the Professorships of Botany and Natural History in the University of Edinburgh; presented, and Read the First time.—166) ... 1168

Superannuation Allowances (Scotland) Bill :—To provide Superannuation Allowances for the Assessor of Railways and Canals in Scotland and the Clerks and other officers permanently employed by him; presented, and Read the First time—(167) 1168

Sale of Distress Amendment Bill :—To amend the Sale of Distress Act 1690; presented, and Read the First time.—(168) 1168

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LORDS : TUESDAY, 23RD MARCH 1897.

Private and Provisional Order Confirmation Bills :—Order made—[No. 35] ... 1169

COMMONS : TUESDAY, 23RD MARCH 1897.

Thompson's Divorce Bill [H.L.] :—Reported from the Select Committee on Divorce Bills, without Amendment 1170

Metropolitan and other Police Courts Bill :—Second Reading deferred 1170

QUESTIONS.

SHUTTLE GUARDS—Question, Sir C. Dilke; Answer, Home Secretary ... 1170
MADAGASCAR—Questions, Mr. Samuel Smith and Mr. Davitt; Answer, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs 1171
BOARD SCHOOLS (SPECIFIC SUBJECTS)—Question, Mr. Sharpe; Answer, Vice President of the Council 1172
PARCEL TRAFFIC (ENGLAND AND AMERICA)—Questions, Sir Howard Vincent; Answers, Secretary to the Treasury 1172
ASCENSION DAY (WEST HAM SCHOOL BOARD)—Question, Lord Balcarres; Answer, Vice President of the Council 1173
LAND COMMISSION (REDUCTIONS OF RENT)—Questions, Sir J. Colomb, Mr. Flavin, and Mr. Carson; Answers, Chief Secretary for Ireland ... 1174
POSTMEN'S WAGES—Question, Sir J. Leng; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 1175
JAMAICA (PORT ROYAL) DOCKYARD—Questions, Mr. Gibson Bowles; Answers, Civil Lord of the Admiralty 1175
ROADS IN BURGHS (SCOTLAND)—Question, Mr. Cochrane; Answer, Lord Advocate 1177
ARMY MAJORS (COMPULSORY RETIREMENT)—Question, Sir J. Dorington; Answer, Under Secretary for War 1178
IRISH MAIL SERVICE—Question, Mr. Farrell; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 1178
WORKMISTRESSES (IRISH NATIONAL SCHOOLS)—Question, Mr. Farrell; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1179
LOAN FUND SOCIETIES (IRELAND)—Questions, Dr. McDonnell and Mr. Knox; Answers, Attorney General for Ireland 1179
EXPERIMENTS ON LIVING ANIMALS—Questions, Mr. MacNeill; Answers, Home Secretary 1180
CHILDREN'S METROPOLITAN ASYLUMS BOARD—Questions, Mr. Bemrose, Mr. Flower, and Mr. Lough; Answers, President of the Local Government Board 1182
CRETE—Questions, Sir Chas. Dilke, Mr. MacNeill, Mr. Gibson Bowles, and Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett; Answers, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs 1182
QUEEN'S JUBILEE PROCESSION—Questions, Sir J. Brunner and Mr. Darling; Answers, Home Secretary [Mr. Speaker]... 1184

ROYAL NATIONAL LIFEBOAT INSTITUTION (SELECT COMMITTEE)—Questions, Sir Wm. Houldsworth, Mr. Schwann, and Sir R. Penrose FitzGerald; Answers, President of the Board of Trade 1185
LOCAL LOANS—Questions, Mr. Knox; Answers, Secretary to the Treasury... 1187
BOGUS TELEGRAMS, IRELAND (ALLEGED)—Question, Mr. Knox; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 1187
ARMY PENSIONS—Question, Captain Pirie; Answer, Under Secretary for War 1188
PIERS AND BOATSLIPS (SCOTLAND)—Questions, Mr. McLeod; Answers, Lord Advocate 1189
CORK ASSIZES (JUDGES' MILITARY GUARD)—Questions, Mr. MacNeill and Mr. Carson; Answers, Secretary to the Treasury and Attorney General for Ireland 1190
COUNTY COURT JUDGE (FERMANAGH AND MONAGHAN)—Question, Mr. Macaleese; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland... 1192
LOCAL TAXATION—Question, Sir J. Lubbock; Answer, President of the Local Government Board 1192
BURGESS ROLL (KILKENNY)—Questions, Mr. Patrick O'Brien and Mr. J. Lowther; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland [Mr. Speaker] 1192
NECESSITOUS BOARD SCHOOLS BILL—Question, Mr. Roberts; Answer, First Lord of the Treasury 1193
MORAY FIRTH (ILLEGAL FISHING)—Question, Mr. Gordon; Answer, Lord Advocate 1193

Rivers Pollution Prevention Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1193

Rating of Machinery Suspensory Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1194

Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill:—Read a Second time, and Committed 1194

MOTIONS.

Police Pensions and Service Bill:—To amend the Police Acts with regard to pensions and Service; presented, and Read the First time—(172) 1194

Police Appointment and Promotion Bill:—To amend the Police Acts with regard to co-operation between police forces, the powers of local authorities, and the appointment and promotion of police officers; presented, and Read the First time—(173) 1194

Cottage Homes Bill:—To authorise the provision of cottage homes for the aged deserving poor; presented, and Read the First time—(174) 1194

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

CLERICAL INCOMES TAXATION:—

Motion made:—

"That, in view of the distressed condition of many of the clergy whose remuneration is principally derived from tithe rent-charge, this House is of opinion that the burdens of local taxation borne by them are inequitable and excessive, and that the grievance is one that calls for substantial relief"—*(Mr. Round)* 1194

Mr. L. Hardy 1199
Mr. Harrison 1201
Mr. Osborne 1205
Mr. Griffith 1207
Captain Pretyman ... 1210
Mr. Carvell Williams ... 1211
Colonel Milward 1213
Mr. Birrell 1214
Mr. Jeffreys 1215
Sir J. Leng 1216
Mr. Jebb 1218
Chancellor of the Exchequer ... 1219

The House divided:—Ayes, 178; Noes, 97.—(Division List, No. 143) ... 1224

London Taxation (Grants in Aid) :—

Motion made,—

"That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that a Select Committee be appointed to consider whether the amount annually received by London under grants in aid bears a just proportion to the amount contributed by London to the general taxes of the nation."—*(Mr. Lough)* 1224

Sir J. Lubbock 1226
President, Local Government Board 1227

Motion withdrawn 1228

Piers and Harbours :—

Motion made,—

"That, in the opinion of this House, in the interests of trade and communication by sea between places on the coast of England and Wales, and with a view to the protection and development of sea fisheries and the safety of the persons engaged in them, it is desirable that a Departmental Committee be appointed to inquire in what way and to what extent the existing provision of piers and harbours on those coasts should be improved."—*(Mr. E. Lawrence)* ... 1228

House Counted out... 1228

COMMONS: WEDNESDAY, 24th MARCH 1897.

Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill :—Considered in Committee, and reported without Amendment 1229

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Court of Criminal Appeal Bill :—

Motion made,—

"That this Bill be now read a Second time."—*(Mr. Pickersgill)* 1229

Sir A. Rollit 1235
Mr. Bucknill 1239
Mr. Ambrose 1241
Sir R. Reid 1242
Mr. Ascroft 1247
Mr. Wharton 1249
Mr. Loyd 1251
Mr. Brynmor Jones ... 1257
Mr. Darling 1259
Home Secretary 1261
Sir E. Clarke... 1268
Mr. Howell 1271
Sir H. Howorth 1272
Sir H. Fowler 1274
Attorney General 1276
Mr. Gibson Bowles 1280

Mr. Pickersgill claimed to move, "That the Question be now put" ... 1281

Question put, "That the Question be now put." The House divided :—Ayes, 147; Noes, 86.—(Division List, No. 144) 1282

Question put accordingly, "That the Bill be now Read a Second time." The House divided:—Ayes, 129; Noes, 85.—(Division List, No. 145).—Bill Read a Second time 1282

Motion made,—

"That the Bill be committed to a Select Committee."—*(Mr. Pickersgill.)* Debate stood adjourned 1282

County Government (Ireland) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1282

Manhood Suffrage (Ireland) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1282

Leaseholders (Purchase of Fee Simple) Bill:—Second Reading deferred ... 1282

Sea Fisheries (Scotland) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1282

Land Tenure Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1282

Succession (Scotland) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1282

Access to Mountains (Scotland) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1283

Parish Registers Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1283

Registration of Firms Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1283

Aliens Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1283

Solicitors (Ireland) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1283

Appointment of High Sheriffs (Ireland) Bill:—Second Reading deferred ... 1283

Tithe Redemption Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1283

Solicitors (Magistracy) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1283

SUPPLY:—Committee deferred 1283

WAYS AND MEANS:—Committee deferred 1283

Estates Tail Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1283

Highways Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1284

Municipal Elections (Ireland) (Women) Bill:—Second Reading deferred ... 1284

Employers' Liability (Foreign Shipowners) Amendment Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1284

Land Law (Ireland) (No. 2) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1284

Bakehouses Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1284

Military Lands Act (1892) Amendment Bill:—Commitee deferred 1284

Mersey Channels Bill:—Committee deferred 1284

Licensing Exemption (Houses of Parliament) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1284

Voluntary Schools Bill:—On the Motion "That this House do now adjourn,"

First Lord of the Treasury gave notice that, in order to complete the proceedings on the Voluntary Schools Bill, he would To-morrow move that the Twelve o'clock Rule be suspended 1284

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LORDS: THURSDAY, 25TH MARCH 1897.

EARL OF NORMANTON (CLAIM TO VOTE FOR REPRESENTATIVE PEERS FOR IRELAND) 1285

NEW PEERS:—James Williamson, esquire, created Baron Ashton of Ashton in the County Palatine of Lancaster 1285

Alexander Smith Kinnear, one of the Lords of Session in Scotland, with the designation of Lord Kinnear, created Baron Kinnear of Spurness in the County of Orkney 1285

Army Annual Bill:—Read 2a; Committee negatived 1285

IRISH JUDGES AND MILITARY GUARDS (IRELAND):—(*Lord Morris*)... ... 1286

Secretary of State for War 1288, 1292
Earl of Camperdown... ... 1292
Lord Herschell 1292

Motion withdrawn 1293

Post Office Consolidation Bill:—Reported from the Joint Committee on Statute Law Revision Bills, with an Amendment, and Committed 1293

COMMONS: THURSDAY, 25TH MARCH 1897.

QUESTIONS.

WEIGHING OF CATTLE—Questions, Sir Herbert Maxwell; Answers, President of the Board of Agriculture 1293

RABIES—Question, Dr. Farquharson; Answer, President of the Board of Agriculture 1294

CAVALRY HORSES (HOME ESTABLISHMENT)—Question, Sir C. Dilke; Answer, Under Secretary for War 1295

CYCLES (CARRIAGE BY RAIL)—Question, Mr. Hazell; Answer, President of the Board of Trade 1295

BETTING ON RACECOURSES—Question, Mr. Pickersgill; Answer, Home Secretary 1296

SCOTTISH PRISON SERVICE—Questions, Mr. Orr-Ewing; Answers, Secretary to the Treasury 1297

RED SEA LIGHTS—Questions, Sir J. Fergusson; Answers, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs and President of the Board of Trade 1298

CHELSEA HOSPITAL (MEAT SUPPLY)—Question, Captain Donelan; Answer, Financial Secretary to the War Office 1298

POST OFFICE (BOGESKEY, CO. CAVAN)—Question, Mr. Young; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 1299

MAGISTRACY (COUNTIES MEATH AND CAVAN)—Question, Mr. Young; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland... 1299

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HORSE BREEDING—Question, Mr. Jeffreys; Answer, Chancellor of the Exchequer 1300

CERTIFICATES OF MARRIAGE—Question, Mr. Carvell Williams; Answer, Lord Advocate 1300

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—Questions, Mr. Daly and Mr. Jasper Tully; Answers, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1301

THAMES POLICE COURT—Question, Mr. Darling; Answer, Home Secretary... 1302

QUEEN'S JUBILEE PROCESSION—Questions, Mr. Darling, Mr. Kearley, Mr. Carvell Williams, and Mr. Gibson Bowles; Answers, Home Secretary and First Commissioner of Works... 1302

ARMY CLOTHING DEPARTMENT—Questions, Captain Norton, Mr. Dillon, and Mr. A. O'Connor; Answers, Financial Secretary to the War Office ... 1304

NAVAL INTERPRETERS—Questions, Mr. Crombie, and Mr. Gibson Bowles; Answers, First Lord of the Admiralty 1305

LAND COMMISSION (IRELAND)—Question, Mr. Farrell; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1306

EVICTED TENANTS (CO. CAVAN) Question, Mr. Farrell; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1306

LAW COURTS (INJURY TO WORKMAN)—Question, Captain Norton; Answer, First Commissioner of Works 1306

IRISH MAIL SERVICE Question, Mr. Dillon; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 1307

POST OFFICE ESTABLISHMENTS (CORK POST OFFICE)—Question, Mr. Farrell; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury... 1308

DONCASTER TOWN MOOR (HORSE RACING)—Question, Sir J. Brunner; Answer, President of the Board of Agriculture 1308

CRETE—Questions, Mr. Flynn, Mr. Dillon, Mr. Brynmor Jones, Mr. J. Morley, Mr. A. O'Connor, Mr. MacNeill, Mr. Gibson Bowles, Captain Norton, Mr. Rees Davies, and Mr. Bryce; Answers, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs [Mr. Speaker] 1309

MULLINGAR UNION (OUTDOOR RELIEF)—Question, Mr. Tully; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1313

HOUSE OF COMMONS TERRACE (STRANGERS)—Questions, Sir H. Fowler; Answers, First Commissioner of Works 1314

CHANNEL FLEET—Question, Sir Leonard Lyell; Answer, First Lord of the Admiralty 1315

PUBLIC WORKS (SCOTLAND)—Question, Mr. McLeod; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury... 1315

AGRICULTURAL RATING ACT, 1896 (EXTENSION TO IRELAND)—Questions, Mr. Carson and Mr. Lough; Answers, Chief Secretary for Ireland ... 1316

POST OFFICE WAGES—Question, Sir J. Leng; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 1317

CANAL NAVIGATION—Questions, Sir J. Brunner; Answers, President of the Board of Trade 1317

RAILWAY ACCIDENTS (CORONERS' INQUESTS)—Questions, Mr. Channing; Answers, President of the Board of Trade 1317

SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS (COUNTING VOTING PAPERS) — Question, Mr. Brigg; Answer, Vice President of the Council 1318

MASSACRE AT TOKAT—Questions, Mr. Flynn, Mr. Stevenson, Mr. Hedderwick, Mr. Bryce, Mr. Gibson Bowles, Sir E. Ashmead Bartlett, and Mr. T. P. O'Connor; Answers, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs [Mr. Speaker] 1318

INDIAN FAMINE—Questions, Mr. Schwann; Answers, Secretary of State for India 1321

SUPPLY (POST OFFICE ESTIMATES)—Question, Mr. Woods; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 1322

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NAZIM PASHA (APPOINTMENT)—Questions, Mr. MacNeill; Answers, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs 1322

PAYOS OFFICIALS—Question, Mr. MacNeill; Answer, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs 1323

AGRICULTURAL RATING ACT—Questions, Mr. Macaleese and Mr. Carson; Answers, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1323

SALISBURY PLAIN (MILITARY MANŒUVRES)—Question, General Russell; Answer, Under Secretary for War 1324

VILAYET OF VAN—Question, Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett; Answer, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs 1324

SCOTLAND YARD (CAB DRIVERS)—Question, Captain Norton; Answer, Home Secretary 1324

CUBA (MURDER OF BRITISH SUBJECT)—Question, Mr. Gretton; Answer, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs 1325

SCIENCE AND ART EXAMINATIONS—Question, Mr. Ascroft; Answer, Vice President of the Council 1325

FOOD PRODUCTS ADULTERATION—Questions, Mr. Jeffreys, Sir J. Leng, and Mr. Channing; Answer, First Lord of the Treasury 1325

IRISH MEETING PROHIBITED (CO. MAYO)—Questions, Mr. Dillon; Answers, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1327

FINANCIAL RELATIONS (ENGLAND AND IRELAND)—Question, Mr. E. Robertson; Answer, First Lord of the Treasury 1327

FINANCIAL STATEMENT—Question, Mr. Bartley; Answer, Chancellor of the Exchequer 1328

Queen's Jubilee Procession (Restraint of Evictions, London) Bill:—

Mr. Harry Marks gave notice that to-morrow he would ask leave to introduce a Bill to enable magistrates to restrain the eviction of certain tenants in London until after the Jubilee Procession 1328

MOTION.

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE (EXEMPTION FROM THE STANDING ORDER):—First Lord of the Treasury moved, "That the Proceedings of the House on the Voluntary Schools Bill, if under discussion at 12 o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order (Sittings of the House). The House divided:—Ayes, 269; Noes, 114.—(Division List, No. 146). 1328

Patent Office Extension Bill:—For the Acquisition of Land for the Extension of the Patent Office, and for purposes connected therewith; presented, and Read the First time.—(175) 1329

ROYAL NATIONAL LIFEBOAT INSTITUTION:—Select Committee to inquire into the administration of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution nominated 1329

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Voluntary Schools Bill:—

Motion made, "That this Bill be now Read a Third time.—*(First Lord of the Treasury)* 1329

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—*(Mr. Asquith)* 1329

Solicitor General ... 1346
Mr. S. Evans 1357
Mr. Wanklyn 1365
Sir J. Pease 1367
Lord Hugh Cecil ... 1371
Mr. Alfred Thomas ... 1377
Mr. Jebb 1379
Mr. T. Shaw 1384
Mr. Gray 1389
Mr. Scott 1394
Sir W. Hart Dyke 1396
Mr. J. Morley 1400
First Lord of the Treasury ... 1409

Question put. The House divided:—Ayes, 331; Noes, 133.—(Division List, No. 147—appended).—Bill read the Third time, and passed ... 1420

Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill:—Read the Third time, and passed 1425

Military Works (Money) Bill:—Third Reading deferred 1425

Military Lands Acts (1892) Amendment Bill:—Considered in Committee:—Clause 1—Committee report Progress 1425

Public Offices (Whitehall) Sites Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1425

Public Health (Scotland) Bill:—Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Second Reading [22nd March] further adjourned 1425

Merchant Shipping (Undermanning) Bill:—Second Reading deferred ... 1425

Foreign Prison Made Goods Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1425

Berriew School Bill:—Second Reading deferred... 1425

Kingstown Harbour Roads Transfer Bill:—Second Reading deferred ... 1425

Law of Evidence (Criminal Cases) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1426

Local Government (Aldershot and Farnborough) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1426

Archdeaconry of Cornwall Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1426

Trusts (Scotland) Bill:—Third Reading deferred 1426

Edinburgh University (Transfer of Patronage) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1426

Railway Assessors (Scotland) Superannuation Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1426

Smaller Dwellings (Scotland) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1426

Land Law (Ireland) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1426

Midwives' Registration Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1426

County Councils (Qualification of Women) Bill:—Second Reading deferred ... 1427

Truck Acts Amendment Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1427

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Steam Engines and Boilers (Persons in Charge) Bill :—Adjourned Debate on Motion for Committal to Standing Committee on Trade, Etc. [17th February] further adjourned 1427

Court of Criminal Appeal Bill :—Adjourned Debate on Motion for Committal to Select Committee [24th March] further adjourned 1427

County Government (Ireland) Bill :—Second Reading deferred 1427

Leaseholders' (Purchase of Fee Simple) Bill :—Second Reading deferred ... 1427

Sea Fisheries (Scotland) Bill :—Second Reading deferred 1427

Municipal Elections (Ireland) (Women) Bill :—Second Reading deferred ... 1427

Licensing Exemption (Houses of Parliament) Bill :—Second Reading deferred 1427

MOTIONS.

Appeal in Certain Civil Matters (Ireland) Bill :—To provide for an Appeal in Ireland in Cases stated by Justices in Certain Civil Matters; presented and Read the First time; to be Read a Second time upon Tuesday, 6th April, and to be printed.—(176) 1428

County Secretaries Superannuation (Ireland) Bill :—To enable Grand Juries in Ireland to grant Superannuation Allowances to County Secretaries; presented and Read the First time; to be Read a Second time upon Wednesday 7th April, and to be printed.—(177) 1428

GOVERNMENT OFFICES (APPROPRIATION OF SITES) :—Select Committee appointed to inquire into and report upon the manner in which the Sites available for the erection of the new buildings required for Government Offices may best be appropriated for that purpose... 1428

LORDS: FRIDAY, 26TH MARCH 1897.

Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill :—Brought from the Commons: Read 1ª; Read 2ª; Committee negatived; Bill Read 3ª, and passed 1429

Voluntary Schools Bill :—Brought from the Commons and Read 1ª. (The Lord President, *D. Devonshire*.)—[No. 37] 1429

Army (Annual) Bill :—Read 3ª and passed 1429

Post Office Consolidation Bill [H.L.] :—Considered in Committee; Amendment proposed by the Joint Committee made; Standing Committee negatived 1429

Land Transfer Bill [H.L.] :—Considered in Committee, reported without Amendment; and re-committed to the Standing Committee 1429

COMMONS: FRIDAY, 26TH MARCH, 1897.

EDUCATIONAL ENDOWMENTS (IRELAND) ACT, 1885 (LIMERICK, KILLALOE, AND KILFENORA DIOCESAN SCHOOL) :—Queen's answer to the Address of the 8th March 1429

Thompson's Divorce Bill [H.L.] :—Read the Third time, and passed without Amendment 1430

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QUESTIONS.

MILITIA OFFICERS—Question, Sir C. Dilke; Answer, Under Secretary for War 1430
AGRICULTURAL RATING ACT, 1896—Question, Mr. Daly; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1430
ARMY MOBILISATION (HOME DEFENCE)—Question, Colonel Welby; Answer, Under Secretary for War 1431
RAILWAYS (CO. CAVAN)—Questions, Mr. Farrell; Answers, Secretary to the Treasury and Chief Secretary for Ireland... 1431
GUN LICENCE (BALLYBUNION, CO. KERRY)—Question, Mr. Flavin; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1432
EVICTED TENANTS (CO. MONAGHAN)—Question, Mr. Daly; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1432
SCOTTISH PROVIDENT ASSURANCE COMPANY—Question, Mr. Farrell; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1433
LABOURERS' COTTAGES (CO. CAVAN)—Question, Mr. Young; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1433
ARTILLERY AND CAVALRY HORSES—Question, Captain Jessel; Answer, Under Secretary for War 1434
ARMY RESERVISTS—Question, Captain Jessel; Answer, Under Secretary for War 1434
NAVAL HOSPITALS—Question, Sir J. Colomb; Answer, First Lord of the Admiralty 1435
ST. STEPHEN'S SCHOOL, LEWISHAM—Question, Lord Hugh Cecil; Answer, Vice President of the Council 1435
IRISH MAIL SERVICE—Question, Mr. Patrick O'Brien; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 1436
PROHIBITED MEETING (IRELAND)—Questions, Mr. Dillon and Captain Donelan; Answers, Chief Secretary for Ireland [Mr. Speaker]... ... 1436
CRETE—Questions, Mr. Dillon, Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett, Mr. MacNeill, and Mr. Flynn; Answers, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs 1438
NAVAL INTERPRETERS—Questions, Captain Pirie, Captain Donelan, and Mr. Gibson Bowles; Answers, First Lord of the Admiralty 1139
MASSACRE AT TOKAT—Question, Mr. Flynn; Answer, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs 1440
COUNTY COURTS AND SUB-SHERIFFS (IRELAND)—Question, Mr. Tully; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1440
LAW (CODIFICATION)—Questions, Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett; Answers, First Lord of the Treasury 1440
WALLACE COLLECTION (BEQUEST TO NATION)—Question, Mr. Massey-Mainwaring; Answer, First Lord of the Treasury 1441
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—Question, Mr. Dillon; Answer, First Lord of the Treasury 1442

Prisoners' Personal Correction Prohibition Bill:—Second Reading deferred ... 1442

MOTIONS.

Restraint of Evictions (London) Bill:—To restrain Eviction of certain Tenants in London until after the date of the Jubilee Procession; presented, and Read the First time.—(178) 1443

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY [Fourth Allotted Day].—Considered in Committee.

Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1897-98 (Vote on Account) 1443

Amendment proposed, to reduce the Vote relating to the Local Government Board by £100.—*(Sir Albert Rollit)* 1446

Amendment withdrawn 1486

Amendment proposed (Secret Service Money) "That the item of £40,000 for the Home Office be reduced by £1,000."—*(Mr. Flynn)* 1486

Question put. The Committee divided:—Ayes, 50; Noes, 107.—(Division List, No. 148) 1504

Eastern Question 1504

First Lord of the Treasury claimed to move "That the Question be now put" 1527

Question put, "That the Question be now put." The Committee divided:—Ayes, 130; Noes, 48.—(Division List, No. 149) ... 1527

Question put accordingly, "That the Item of £22,000, for the Foreign Office, be reduced by £1,666." The Committee divided:—Ayes, 44; Noes, 128—(Division List, No. 150) 1527

First Lord of the Treasury claimed, "That the Original Question be now put" 1528

Original Question put accordingly. The Committee divided:—Ayes, 128; Noes, 44.—(Division List, No. 151) 1528

Ways and Means:—Committee deferred 1528

Universities of Oxford and Cambridge Act, 1887:—

Motion made—

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to withhold her consent from the Statute made by the governing body of Oriel College, Oxford, altering Statute IV. of the statutes of the college by the insertion of the 18th clause of a new clause numbered 18a."—*(Sir L. McIver.)*

After brief Debate, Motion agreed to 1528

LORDS: MONDAY, 29th March 1897.

Commission—The following Bills received the Royal Assent:—

1. Army (Annual) 1529
2. Consolidated Fund (No. 1) 1529
3. London (Borough Road, Southwark) Provisional Order 1529
4. London (Churchway, St. Pancras) Provisional Order... 1529
5. Metropolitan Police Provisional Order... 1529
6. Surveyors (County Dublin) 1529

Thompson's Divorce Bill [h.l.]:—Returned from the Commons agreed to... ... 1529

Occupiers Dwellings Bill [h.l.]:—Bill to provide facilities for the acquisition by occupiers and occupying ratepayers of their dwellings: presented by the Lord de Vesci *(V. de Vesci)* (for Lord Wemyss), and Read 1ª.—[No. 38] 1529

Infant Life Protection Bill [H.L.] :—
Motion made :—
"That this Bill be now read a Second time.—*(Earl of Denbigh)* 1529
Bishop of Winchester ... 1531 *Lord Belper* 1534
Bill Read a Second time, and committed 1535

Post Office Consolidation Bill [H.L.] :—Amendment Reported 1535

COMMONS: MONDAY, 29TH MARCH 1897.

COMMISSION.—Royal Assent reported to Bills which had passed both Houses. —(For List, see Proceedings of the House of Lords of this date) ... 1535
FINANCIAL RELATIONS (GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND) :—Petition from Dublin Presented 1535

QUESTIONS.

IRISH MODEL SCHOOLS DEPARTMENT—Question, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1537
MANITOBA (EDUCATION QUESTION)—Question, Mr. W. Johnston; Answer, Secretary of State for the Colonies... 1537
LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL (AUDIT)—Question, Sir A. Scoble; Answer, Secretary to the Local Government Board 1538
VOLUNTEER OFFICERS (CLASSES AT WELLINGTON BARRACKS)—Question, Mr. Duncombe; Answer, Under Secretary for War 1538
ROXBOROUGH SCHOOLS, LIMERICK—Question, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answer, Attorney General for Ireland 1539
LAND COMMISSION—Questions, General Hugh McCalmont, Mr. Arnold-Forster, Mr. Flynn, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. J. Lowther, and Mr. Carson; Answers, Chief Secretary for Ireland [Mr. Speaker] 1540
TELEGRAPH SERVICE ACCOUNTS—Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 1542
QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE (IMPERIAL STAMPS)—Questions, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answers, Secretary to the Treasury 1543
PLEURO-PNEUMONIA—Questions, Mr. Field and Dr. Farquharson; Answers, President of the Board of Agriculture 1544
TREASON-FELONY PRISONERS—Questions, Mr. Field and Mr. McCartan; Answers, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1545
INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL CONGRESS—Question, Mr. Field; Answer, President of the Board of Agriculture 1545
ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—Questions, Mr. Farrell and Mr. Tully; Answers, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1546
POSTAL FACILITIES (QUEEN'S CO.)—Question, Mr. A. O'Connor; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 1547
PUBLIC LOANS (IRELAND)—Question, Mr. Pinkerton; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 1548
POLICE PROTECTION (DROMOD, CO. MONAGHAN)—Question, Mr. Daly; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1549
PRISON CLERKS—Question, Mr. Platt-Higgins; Answer, Home Secretary ... 1550
ROYAL MILITARY ACADEMY, WOOLWICH—Question, Mr. Bartley; Answer, Under Secretary for War 1550
INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS (IRELAND)—Question, Mr. McGhee; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1551

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PARSONSTOWN AND PORTUMNA RAILWAY (IRELAND)—Questions, Mr. Field and Mr. Dane; Answers, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1551

QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE (COLONIAL PREMIERS)—Question, Mr. Hogan; Answer, Secretary of State for the Colonies 1552

NEW HEBRIDES—Question, Mr. Hogan; Answer, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs 1553

ARMY MEDICAL STAFF—Question, Captain Norton; Answer, Under Secretary for War 1553

COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON EDUCATION—Questions, Mr. Flynn; Answers, Vice President of the Council 1553

RURAL POSTMEN (WAGES)—Questions, Captain Donelan and Sir C. Dilke; Answers, Secretary to the Treasury 1554

BRITISH SOUTH AFRICA (INSTRUCTIONS TO SIR A. MILNER)—Questions, Mr. Stanhope; Answers, Secretary of State for the Colonies [Mr. Speaker] 1555

NORFOLK ISLAND—Questions, Mr. Bill and Sir Wilfrid Lawson; Answers, Secretary of State for the Colonies 1555

TRANSVAAL (SUPPRESSION OF NEWSPAPER)—Question, Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett; Answer, Secretary of State for the Colonies 1556

COURT OF CONSCIENCE (CORK)—Questions, Mr. Knox and Mr. Johnston; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1557

POSTAGE (NEWSPAPER AND BOOK PACKETS)—Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 1558

SOUTH AFRICAN LEAGUE—Questions, Mr. Stanhope; Answers, Secretary of State for the Colonies 1559

AGRICULTURAL PRICES (IRELAND)—Question, Mr. McCartan; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1560

POST OFFICE ESTABLISHMENTS—Questions, Mr. Massey-Mainwaring, Mr. Woods, Mr. J. F. O'Brien, and Mr. Knox; Answers, Secretary to the Treasury 1560

LABOURERS' COTTAGES (CALLAN BOARD OF GUARDIANS)—Question, Mr. Patrick O'Brien; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1563

MARYLEBONE COUNTY COURT—Question, Mr. Woods; Answer, Home Secretary 1563

DOMESTIC SERVANTS' CHARACTERS—Question, Mr. Woods; Answer, Home Secretary 1564

PENRHYN QUARRIES—Question, Mr. Woods; Answer, Secretary to the Treasury 1564

SWINE FEVER (BISHOPS WALTHAM)—Question, Admiral Field; Answer, President of the Board of Agriculture 1565

POLICE SUPERVISION—Question, Captain Pirie; Answer, Home Secretary ... 1566

BUILDING GRANTS (ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS)—Question, Mr. Channing; Answer, Vice President of the Council 1566

VOLUNTEER BATTALIONS AT ALDERSHOT—Questions, Colonel Dalbiac and Sir H. Vincent; Answers, Under Secretary for War 1567

ELECTRIC TRAM SPEED (BALL'S BRIDGE TO DALKEY, CO. DUBLIN)—Question, Mr. Field; Answer, Secretary of State for India 1567

REGULATIONS FOR PREVENTING COLLISIONS AT SEA—Question, Mr. C. H. Wilson; Answer, Secretary of State for India 1567

BRITISH TROOPS IN INDIA (HEALTH)—Questions, Sir J. Fergusson, General Laurie, and Major Rasch; Answers, Secretary of State for India and First Lord of the Treasury 1568

METROPOLITAN POLICE BOOTS—Question, Captain Norton; Answer, Home Secretary 1569

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE COMMITTEES (IRELAND)—Question, Mr. J. O'Connor; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1569

CONVICT PRISON WARDERS—Question, Mr. Pickersgill; Answer, Home Secretary 1569

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SCIENCE AND ART GRANT (IRELAND)—Questions, Mr. Murnaghan and Mr. Knox; Answers, Vice President of the Council 1570
ARMAGH UNION WORKHOUSE—Questions, Mr. Farrell; Answers, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1571
INDIA OFFICE (AUDIT DEPARTMENT)—Question, Mr. Hazell; Answer, Secretary of State for India 1572
HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE (CHANCERY DIVISION CLERKS)—Question, Mr. Boulnois; Answer, Attorney General 1572
COUNTY COURT FEES (TRAVELLING EXPENSES)—Question, Mr. Lambert; Answer, Attorney General... 1573
FOREIGN ORDERS—Questions, Mr. MacNeill; Answers, First Lord of the Treasury 1573
CRETE—Questions, Mr. Dillon, Mr. Channing, and Mr. F. S. Stevenson; Answers, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs [Mr. Speaker] 1574

Market Gardeners' Compensation (Scotland) Bill:—Second Reading deferred ... 1577

MOTION.

Regular and Elders' Widows' Funds Bill:—To make provision for the transfer of the assets, liabilities, and management of the Regular Widows' Fund, and of the Elders' Widows' Fund, to the Secretary of State in Council in India, and for other purposes in relation thereto; presented accordingly, and Read the First time.—(179) ... 1577

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

FINANCIAL RELATIONS (GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND):—
Motion made:—
"That, in the opinion of this House, the Report and Proceedings of the Royal Commission on the Financial Relations of Great Britain and Ireland establish the existence of an undue burden of taxation on Ireland, which constitutes a great grievance to all classes of the Irish community, and makes it the duty of the Government to propose at an early day remedial legislation."—(*Mr. Blake*)... 1577

Amendment proposed:—
"So long as the Exchequers of Great Britain and Ireland remain consolidated all portions of the United Kingdom must be regarded as forming one country for fiscal purposes, and if any genuine and tangible grievance does exist, it can only be satisfactorily removed by so adjusting the present fiscal system as to render it just and equitable to all persons in whatever part of the United Kingdom they may reside."—(*Mr. Whittaker*) 1607

Colonel Waring ... 1624
Sir Thomas Esmonde ... 1626
Chancellor of the Exchequer 1631
Sir E. Clarke 1652
First Lord of the Treasury 1652

Debate adjourned till to-morrow 1652

Military Works (Money) Bill:—Third Reading deferred 1652

Military Lands Act (1892) Amendment Bill:—Considered in Committee and Reported 1653

SUPPLY [26th MARCH]:—Resolutions reported and read a Second time. Civil Services and Revenue Departments Estimates, 1897–8 (Vote on Account) 1653

CRETE:—Amendment proposed:—On Class 2, Vote 5 (Salary of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), to reduce the item by £1,666—(*Mr. Stanhope*) 1656

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Question put:—"That '£10,631,218' stand part of the Resolution." The House divided:—Ayes, 163; Noes, 60.—(Division List, No. 152.) Resolution agreed to 1677

Dangerous Performances Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1677

Metropolitan and other Police Courts Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1677

Patent Office Extension Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1678

Public Offices (Whitehall) Site Bill:—Second Reading deferred... 1678

Public Health (Scotland) Bill:—Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Second Reading [22nd March] further adjourned 1678

Merchant Shipping (Undermanning) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1678

Foreign Prison Made Goods Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1678

Berriew Schools Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1678

Kingstown Harbour Roads Transfer Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1678

Law of Evidence (Criminal Cases) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1678

Local Government (Aldershot and Farnborough) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1678

Archdeaconry of Cornwall Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1678

Trusts (Scotland) Bill:—Second Reading deferred... 1678

Edinburgh University (Transfer of Patronage) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1679

Railway Assessors (Scotland) Superannuation Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1679

SUPPLY:—Committee deferred 1679

WAYS AND MEANS:—Committee deferred 1679

Warehousemen's Certificates Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1679

Labourers' Cottages (Ireland) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1679

Industries (Ireland) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1679

Poor Law Officers' Superannuation (Ireland) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1679

Poor Law Officers' Superannuation Act (1896) Amendment Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1679

Plumbers' Registration Bill:—Second Reading deferred... 1679

Steam Engines and Boilers (Persons in Charge) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1680

Highways Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1680

Court of Criminal Appeal Bill:—Adjourned Debate on Motion for committal to Select Committee [24th March] further adjourned 1680

County Government (Ireland) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1680

Municipal Elections (Ireland) (Women) Bill:—Second Reading deferred ... 1680

Licensing Exemption (Houses of Parliament) Bill:—Second Reading deferred 1680

MOTION.

Canals and Navigable Rivers (Ireland) Bill:—To amend the Law relating to Canals and Navigable Rivers in Ireland, Read the First time.—(180) 1680

END OF VOL. XLVII.

BILLS DEALT WITH IN VOL. XLVII.

Title of Bill.	*Progress.*
Accountants	Read 1°, Mar. 16.
Appeal in Certain Civil Matters (Ireland)	Read 1°, Mar. 25.
Army Annual	Royal Assent, Mar. 29.
Bakehouses	Read 1°, Mar. 9.
Canals and Navigable Rivers (Ireland)	Read 1°, Mar. 29.
Chelsea Water (Purchase)	Second Reading negatived, Mar. 11.
City of London (Inclusion of Southwark)	Second Reading negatived, Mar. 22.
Consolidated Fund (No. 1)	Royal Assent, Mar. 29.
Cottage Homes	Read 1°, Mar. 23.
Cotton, Cloth, and Other Factories	Read 1°, Mar. 9.
County Secretaries' Superannuation (Ireland)	Read 1°, Mar. 25,
Court of Criminal Appeal	Read 2°, Mar. 24.
Dangerous Performances	Read 1°, Mar. 22.
Dundee Corporation	Debate on Instruction, Mar. 5.
East London Water (Purchase)	Withdrawn, Mar. 11.
Edinburgh University (Transfer of Patronage)	Read 1°, Mar. 22.
Grand Junction Water (Purchase)	Withdrawn, Mar. 11.
Great Northern Railway	Debate on Instruction, Mar. 8.
Infant Life Protection	Read 2ª, and Committed, Mar. 29.
Isle of Man (Church Building Acts)	Read 3ª, and Passed, Mar. 22.
Juries Detention	Read 1ª, Mar. 11.
Kent Water Board	Withdrawn, Mar. 11.
Kent Water (Purchase)	Withdrawn, Mar. 11.
Kingstown Harbour Roads Transfer	Read 1°, Mar. 9,
Lambeth Water (Purchase)	Withdrawn, Mar. 11.
Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway	Debate on Instruction, Mar. 8.
Land Transfer	Re-committed to Standing Committee, Mar. 26.
Licensing Exemption (Houses of Parliament)	Debate on Second Reading, Mar. 12.
London (Borough Road, Southwark), Provisional Order	Royal Assent, Mar. 29.
London (Churchway, St. Pancras), Provisional Order	Royal Assent, Mar. 29.

Title of Bill.	*Progress.*
London Water (Purchase)	Withdrawn, Mar. 11.
Market Gardeners' Compensation (Scotland)	Read 1^{o}, Mar. 9.
Mersey Channels	In Committee, Mar. 22.
Metropolitan Police Provisional Order	Royal Assent, Mar. 29.
Midland and Great Northern Railways Joint Committee	Read 2^{o}, Mar. 9.
Military Lands Act (1892) Amendment	In Committee, Mar. 29.
Military Works	In Committee, Mar. 22.
New River Water (Purchase)	Withdrawn, Mar. 11.
Occupiers' Dwellings	Read 1^{a}, Mar. 29.
Parliamentary Franchise (Women) [H.L.]	Second Reading negatived, Mar. 8.
Patent Office Extension	Read 1^{o}, Mar. 25.
Police Appointment and Promotion	Read 1^{o}, Mar. 23.
Police Pensions and Service	Read 1^{o}, Mar. 23.
Post Office Consolidation	Reported, May 29.
Preferential Payments in Bankruptcy Act (1888) Amendment	Read 1^{a}, Mar. 12.
Public Health (Scotland)	Debate on Second Reading, Mar. 22.
Public Offices (Whitehall) Site	Read 1^{o}, Mar. 22.
Quarter Sessions Jurors (Ireland)	Read 1^{o}, Mar. 15.
Regular and Elders' Widows' Funds	Read 1^{o}, Mar. 29.
Restraint of Evictions (London)	Read 1^{o}, Mar. 26.
Retirement of Vestrymen and Auditors	Read 3^{a} and Passed, Mar. 12.
Sale of Distress Amendment	Read 1^{o}, Mar. 22.
Southwark and Vauxhall Water (Purchase)	Withdrawn, Mar. 11.
Superannuation Allowances (Scotland)	Read 1^{o}, Mar. 22.
Surveyors (County Dublin)	Royal Assent, Mar. 29.
Thompson's Divorce	Read 3^{o} and Passed, Mar. 26.
Tithe Redemption	Read 1^{o}, Mar. 9.
Town Holdings (Tenants' Compensation)	Read 1^{o}, Mar. 15.
Trout Fishing Close Time (Scotland)	Read 1^{o}, Mar. 12.
Trusts (Scotland)	Considered as Amended, Mar 15.
Voluntary Schools	Read 1^{a}, Mar. 26.
West Middlesex Water (Purchase)	Withdrawn, Mar. 11.
Working Men's Dwellings	Read 3^{a} and Passed, Mar. 19.

ERRATA.

Page 236. *The Motion of the First Lord of the Treasury, in paragraph* 3, *should read,* "That the question 'That the words of the Clause down to the word "due" in line 12, stand part of the Clause,' be now put."

Page 348. *After* [*Ministerial cries of* "No!"] *read*:—

MR. CRIPPS (Gloucester, Stroud) said he thought the unpopularity of the proposal to which the hon. Member who had just spoken had referred, as well as what he himself said, particularly in his closing remarks, was almost entirely due to misapprehension of what the proposals of the Bill really meant. If he might put his own experience against that of the hon. Member, several representatives of the National Union of Elementary Teachers in his constituency had approached him as regarded the provisions of the Bill with reference to association, but whenever he had explained what the proposals of the Bill were they not only withdrew their objections, but assented to them as valuable provisions in favour of national primary education. [*Cheers.*] There were two chief points which had to be kept distinct —the attitude of such voluntary associations as now existed and the duties which would be thrown on the associations proposed to be constituted by the Bill.

The remaining portion of Mr. Cripps' speech, beginning with the words, "The action of our voluntary associations," *is correctly reported.*

Page 592, *line* 31, *instead of* "inhabitants of the dock," *read* "vessels of the dock." *Line* 41, *instead of* "narrow waters," *read* "a man-of-war."

THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(Authorised Edition)

IN THE

THIRD SESSION OF THE *TWENTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT* OF
THE UNITED KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN* AND *IRELAND*
APPOINTED TO MEET JANUARY 19, 1897, IN THE SIXTIETH YEAR OF
THE REIGN OF

HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

THIRD VOLUME OF SESSION 1897.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, 5th March 1897.

THOMPSON'S DIVORCE BILL [H.L.].

Read 3^a (according to Order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

FINANCIAL RELATIONS COMMISSION (IRELAND.)

*LORD CASTLETOWN moved that the references to the proposed new Commission on the Financial Relations between Great Britain and Ireland be laid before the House. He divided the subject under three heads—the historical aspect, the period between 1800 and 1853, and the period between 1853 and 1897. Before going into the modern question of the Report he should try to clear away two subjects which had been imported into and obscured the main issue. He thought that taxable capacity had been one of the great bugbears and conundrums in the whole of this question. It had been mixed up with ingenuity by their opponents with the other question of separate entity, and the result had been a conflict of opinion which had made the English taxpayer think that he had to be taxed, or even was taxed now, unfairly relatively to his Irish brother, and that if the Irishman and Scotchman would drink less whisky the Englishman would benefit. The attempt to investigate this question on the whisky or beer basis was absurd, puerile, and unstatesmanlike, and was unjust to the intelligence of those who had gone carefully into it. There were four salient points with regard to taxable capacity. First, considered as regards direct taxation; secondly, as regards indirect taxation; thirdly, considered as regards taxation by individuals or by geographical areas. He thought they might at once dispose of the two latter points. In these islands taxable capacity was regulated by classes of individuals, and therefore every Irishman, every Scotchman, and every Englishman must bear his burden. But then came the question of direct taxation, and here at once they were met by one of the great difficulties of the Report they were discussing, and also the difficulty of the references to that which was now to be formed. Direct taxation undoubtedly more or less attached itself to those who were well off. In Ireland very few were well off, and very few now are well off. There was no great middle class, as in England. The income tax was deducted from the incomes of rents received, and incomes obtained from commerce, and also from other sources in Ireland. But it was well known that a very large percentage of the income on which that tax was paid was spent in England. He was not referring to absentee landlords, but to the income derived in England from charges on properties in Ireland, on commercial securities invested in England, and on which the income tax goes to England. He also referred to the large sums sent from Ireland to England through the banks, and invested in England, and on which income tax is paid in England and received by England as part of the Imperial revenue. He fancied it was impossible to arrive at these sums; but the sums themselves must be, from the facts he had noted, very large indeed. As regards direct taxation, therefore, alleviation from the income tax only could be sought in some form or another, and only so long as it made no difference in taxation to our fellow-countrymen in Scotland and England. Let him make this clear. Mr. Gladstone put direct taxation and indirect taxation on Ireland in 1853. The first income tax was to last for seven years. It had lasted ever since—over 40 years. If at the time of its imposition there had been what is called an Irish Party in the House of Commons, it was very doubtful if it would have been continued, or been put on at all. Now it was part of the ordinary Imperial taxation, and, as such, was likely to remain so. He merely made this point to show the difference between the two classes of taxation. No Irish Party, on the other hand, could have fought with success, even if united, the imposition of an extra duty on whisky or on tobacco, unless the whole country, the whole taxpaying community, was with them, on the ground that the tax pressed unduly on all classes. Now, with regard to indirect taxation, Ireland, he thought it must be admitted, was a poorer country than Great Britain, yet in the table produced by Sir E. Hamilton it was made clear that in 1892-93 Ireland and England paid almost equal duty per head on tobacco, and Ireland paid slightly more than England on tea. It had been objected by some who had argued this matter that it was unfair for the Irishman to have to pay dearly for what can hardly be called a luxury nowadays, viz., tea and tobacco, and that he was also unfairly treated because he drinks and pays on whisky, while the Englishman drinks and pays on beer. If the Irishman wants to bring about a fair understanding he has only to urge his working class fellow-countrymen in Great Britain to ask a decrease in the tax on tea and tobacco, both articles of daily consumption in England and Scotland; and he did not think, if a solid and universal movement were made in that direction, that any Chancellor of the Exchequer could oppose it. With regard to whisky and beer, they were luxuries, and if they chose to drink they must pay accordingly. No claim could be put forward by Irishmen with regard to unequal indirect taxation. On what they chose to consume they must pay, and abide by Clause 7, which insists on equal taxes, with the reservation of "exemption and abatements." The Commissioners, they found, had arrived at the conclusion that undoubtedly the taxable capacity of Ireland was not very high. In point of fact, they put that taxable capacity at one-twentieth. All he desired to point out on this subject was, Ireland must pay in indirect taxation the equivalent per individual on commodities that are taxed now unless a general change is made in the ratio of that taxation. As regards direct taxation, he believed a case could be made out to justify "abatement" and "exemption," but he hoped no demand would be put forward with a view to asking a remission of income tax. Such remission would only affect the richer classes, and, as he had tried to point out, might only assist those whose Irish money was spent in Great Britain. He now came to the separate fiscal entity problem. Far too much had been made of it, when one realised that Ireland had been treated at one time as a separate entity, and within the next minute as an integral

Lord Castletown.

portion of the Empire. Ireland, on the day the debts were amalgamated, became an integral portion, and yet the very day that amalgamation was enacted Ireland was a separate entity, because the 7th Article proclaimed her entitled to "exemption and abatements." How clearly this was understood was shown by the action of Sir R. Peel, when, in 1842, she was proclaimed a separate entity because the income tax was enforced in England and not in Ireland. To go further, at this moment Ireland was a separate entity and an integral portion. She was a separate entity, because in 1896 the Chancellor of the Exchequer set aside a sum of two millions to relieve agriculturists in these islands. Half the local rates were to be paid out of Imperial funds. The Bill was at first confined to England and Wales. Separate Measures were promised for Scotland and Ireland. Ireland, in this case, was treated as a separate entity; and though the area of land available under the Bill in Scotland was only five million acres and in Ireland about 15 million acres, £200,000 was allotted to Scotland and £180,000 was left for Ireland with 15 million acres of land. Ireland got the full benefit of the separate entity in this case, and instead of getting half the amount of local rates as in England, about £900,000, she was to get 9 per cent. of the two millions, £180,000, showing clearly how the proportionate system is adopted when required. ["Hear, hear!"] Yet, simultaneously, there were many instances of her being treated as an integral portion. For example, loans are forced by the Imperial Exchequer upon the Irish local authorities and bodies for the building of lunatic asylums. There was no power or option to resist, or even control, though the money could be obtained in the open market at a lower rate. It was mere juggling with this question to talk of separate entities and integral portions, and it only confused the issue. The problem was a great Imperial difficulty, and must be discussed on a broader and simpler basis. He now came to the main question, and should deal, in the first place, with the historical aspect. It must affect the view of the justice of the Union, and the lines upon which it was framed, and had been since maintained as regarded by Irishmen, and, what is even more important, by Englishmen, for he desired, if possible, to convince Englishmen of the sincerity of the motives of Irishmen in bringing this matter forward; and in due course, as he thought, he should be able to prove, the justice of their contention. He would, in the first place, summarise the views entertained and expressed by the Commission on this point. In all the evidence that he proposed to utilise in fortifying his argument, he should rely mainly on the reports of Sir D. Barbour and Sir Thomas Sutherland, for, as he understood the contention of those who were opposed to their view of the case, these Commissioners were the representatives of the Imperial Exchequer, and were, so to speak, the advocates against Ireland. It was perfectly clear, from the historical data furnished by the Commissioners, that there rested on the Irish Parliament before the Union an obligation to give some assistance to England, and to support the common cause in case of war with a foreign Power. The amount of such assistance was not, and never had been, settled. It was only a moral obligation. That fact must be clearly remembered; and he wished to impress upon those who took an interest in the great problem that the debt of Ireland up to 1782 was excessively small, the taxation was light, and the expenditure was moderate, and the revenue was adequate to meet the expenditure. This was the statement of Sir D. Barbour. Then came the French war, 1793. Whether for good or evil, that war turned the whole course of events. Ireland was the vulnerable point in the armour of the two islands. Every effort was made by the pupils of French Republicanism and local agitators to infuse continental ideas and revolutionary notions into the mind of the Irish people, and the Rebellion of 1798 added to the financial difficulties and the political perplexities and dangers of both islands. Such, broadly outlined, were the factors which led up to the Union. It was necessary to go into the details a little more carefully. When Ireland was independent, in 1782, she made no contribution to the War Establishment. The Military Establishment was fixed, by the

Act of 1769, at 15,000 men, of which 12,000 were to remain in Ireland. Attempts were made at different times before 1793 to obtain financial assistance from Ireland; and in 1785 a plan was arranged, on the advice of Pitt, by which Ireland was to make over for this purpose whatever amount her revenue might yield over and above £656,000, which was accounted the hereditary revenue of the Crown, provided that her income and expenditure balanced, she receiving, as a consideration for this liberality, complete freedom of trade with Great Britain and the Colonies, which she had not previously enjoyed. This Measure was practically accepted by the Irish Parliament, but afterwards had to be abandoned, owing to the jealousy of British traders, who denounced the policy of admitting Ireland to an equality in regard to home and foreign trade. That was the statement of Sir Thomas Sutherland. It had been his good fortune, in examining into this question, to come across a letter of Mr. Pitt's on the future Union policy. That letter was written to the Duke of Rutland, and was to be found in the private correspondence between the Duke of Rutland and Mr. Pitt, which was printed in London 1842. That letter gave, to his mind, the keynote to the whole policy of the proposed Union; but, as it was very long, he should only quote the following few short and important passages:—

> "If it is indispensable, therefore, that the contributions should be in some degree ascertained at present, it is equally clear, on the other hand, that the quantum of it must not be fixed to any stated sum, which of necessity would either be too great at present or in a little time hence too small. The only thing that seems reasonable is to appropriate a certain fund towards supporting the general expenses of the time of peace, and leave it, as it must be left, to the zeal of Ireland to provide for extraordinary emergencies in time of war as they arise. The fund which seems the best, and indeed the only one that has been pointed out for this purpose, is the hereditary revenue. Though the effect will not be immediate, our object will be attained if the future surplus of this revenue beyond its present produce, estimated at the medium of the four or five last years, is applied in the manner we wish. Such a fund, from the nature of the articles of which it is composed, must have a direct relation to the wealth, the commerce, and the population of Ireland. It will increase with their extension, and cannot even begin to exist without it. Towards this country it will be more acceptable than a much larger contribution in any other way, because, if in fact the commerce of Ireland should be increased at our expense by our manufactures and trade being transferred in any degree thither, the compensation will arise in the same proportion. It has this further inestimable advantage, from being fixed according to a standard which will apply to all the future circumstances of the two countries, that it will from the very permanence of the principle, tend to unite them more closely and firmly to each other. In Ireland it cannot escape consideration, that this is a contribution not given beforehand for uncertain expectations, but which can only follow the actual possession and enjoyment of the benefits in return for which it is given. If Ireland does not grow richer and more populous, she will by this scheme contribute nothing."

The plan, however, of 1785, which Grattan called "the Union *in limine*," failed, and the two countries struggled on apart. In Ireland the expenditure quadrupled between 1796 and 1800, and the deficit rose to £2,500,000. The debt of the country increased by £26,623,673 during the last 18 years of independent Parliament. But in England matters were much worse, and this was the statement of the English champion on the Commission, Sir Thomas Sutherland, on this subject:—

> "The Exchequer deficit rose to £22,607,687 in last five years of the century. It must be remembered that at this date the population of Great Britain and Ireland stood, relatively, as little more than two to one. The population of Great Britain was 10,500,000, and that of Ireland 5,000,000. Yet the expenditure of Great Britain was so enormous that her annual deficit was nearly twenty-three millions, or nine times as large as that of Ireland. The debts of the two countries were in still greater disproportion. The funded debt of Great Britain in 1801 was £446,594,145, and that of Ireland was only £28,541,157; that was in a proportion of more than fifteen to one."

As opposed to this, during Grattan's Parliament, 1785-91, the supplies of Ireland amounted to rather more than 40 per cent. of the gross Irish revenue. He thought, therefore, from all the evidence they had, that Ireland, up to the Act of Union, had the best of the bargain. She had not to contribute more than what she chose, to the forces of the Empire. Her debt, though growing, was not ruinous. Her commerce was, no doubt, hampered, and would have felt the obstructions more and more year by year as Great Britain prospered; but still, taking all into consideration, Ireland was in a position to make fair, if not excellent, terms, having special regard to the fact that Ireland was, and remained to this day, the vulnerable point in any question of invasion, and that therefore England had to make some terms; and that her debt, though increasing, was not ruinous; that her Parliament was free to make terms, and the whole question was one of a Treaty between the two islands—a Treaty framed by the wisest of statesmen, with marvellous foresight and a supreme desire to do justice for years to come to the poorer and, at the moment, free partner, Ireland. That was clearly proved by Pitt's letter which he had quoted, and by his speeches. He now came to the terms of the Act of Union as dealt with by the Commission, and the effect it should have had, and did have, between the years 1800 and 1853. In the first place, let him clearly say that he believed those Irishmen who protested against its accomplishment were right then; still he was convinced, from the course of history since, that, were Grattan and others of that most able and patriotic body still alive, they would be the first to acknowledge how essential the Union was to the existence of Great Britain and Ireland: but he was also convinced that they would have considered the terms of the Treaty were broken after 1853, and would have logically and steadfastly upheld the contention of the Report of this Commission. He was also convinced that Mr. Pitt attempted, as a great statesman, to make as fair a bargain as he could between the conflicting elements; and he thought that, if it had not been for the incidence of the French war, that that bargain would have stood the test of time; and he also said this, and believed it would be proved when the conclusions of the new Commission were arrived at, if the references are fair, that this bargain had, of late years, not been acted upon fairly and in the spirit and in the manner indicated by Mr. Pitt. He would again take as his witnesses Sir D. Barbour and Sir Thomas Sutherland. Sir D. Barbour says:—

> "However excellent the intentions of the Government of Great Britain at that time may have been, it must be admitted that the question of the proportion in which Ireland should contribute to joint expenditure did not receive, before it was accepted, that degree of careful consideration which its importance deserved and demanded."

Lord Castlereagh also, when discussing the question and the proportionate ratios, said that Parliament was to have the power to revise the proportionate contributions of 15 to 2 at the end of 20 years, in case they might

> "under different circumstances, prove to be both partial and disadvantageous. By there being a provision for revision, Ireland has the utmost possible security that she cannot be taxed beyond the measure of her comparative ability, and that the ratio of her contributions must ever correspond with her relative wealth and prosperity."

Article 7 of the Act of Union, on which the whole of this controversy must rest, except that relating to indirect taxation, which was a larger and far-reaching one and an Imperial question, distinctly laid down

> "That the expenditure of the United Kingdom shall be defrayed indiscriminately by equal taxes imposed on the like articles in both countries, subject only to such abatements and exemptions in Ireland and in Scotland as circumstances may from time to time demand."

He believed that, if anyone would with impartial mind study this question, they would find that the Act of Union laid it down, that though no taxes could be levied at higher rates in Ireland or Scotland than in England, yet that taxes might be raised in England which were not to be levied in the other two countries. He now came to the period between 1800 and 1816 up to 1853. There was a salient point which came out when reading the Act of Union—namely, that legally Ireland remained a separate entity and entitled to special consideration financially, and that such treatment was to remain in existence until she had crept up to such a position fiscally as would place her according to the ratio agreed upon, in an analogous position with England; and also that Scotland was entitled to participate in such exceptional treatment. Such, he was convinced, was the idea underlying the Act of Union. The actual plan on which the fiscal arrangements were made was 2-17ths for Ireland in common expenditure, and 15-17ths for England. This was arrived at by a comparison of the trade of the two countries. These Estimates, however, went entirely by the board, for, as Sir Thomas Sutherland said, in the first 16 years of the Union the revenue raised in Great Britain amounted to no less than £927,659,129, and that raised in Ireland in the same period, to £77,844,194. Notwithstanding the large revenue thus raised, a deficit accrued in the finances of Great Britain (after accounting for joint and separate expenditure) which amounted to £373,961,471, while the Irish deficit similarly rose to £81,893,611. These deficits had to be added to the previous respective debts of the two countries, and the result was to alter entirely the relative proportions of their indebtedness. The debt of Great Britain had been, as already stated, more than 15 times greater than that of Ireland. The debt of Great Britain now stood at £737,422,469, and that of Ireland at £112,684,773, so that the former was only six and a-half times greater than that of the latter. Both in Great Britain and Ireland great efforts had been made to raise increased revenue during this long period of war, but they fell short of what was required in both cases. The result was that in 1817 it was found necessary to amalgamate the debts of both countries. He would ask their lordships to bear these facts in mind—namely, (1) that Ireland's debt was small before the Union, though undoubtedly growing; (2) that Ireland had to join England in the French War whether she liked it or not, because England knew that Ireland was the most vulnerable point for invasion; (3) that Ireland had been refused, previous to the Act of Union, owing to the jealousy of British traders, an advantageous bargain; and (4) that Ireland, if she had remained independent of England, could have refused assistance or reduced her military establishment. He would quote Sir D. Barbour on this point—an impartial, or perhaps a partially English, authority. He said:—

> "As, however, the war expenditure continued to grow, and Ireland could not obtain that reduction of the Irish Military establishment which an Irish Parliament would certainly have carried out after 1805, if not sooner, there can be no question but that Ireland on the whole lost heavily by having to contribute to joint expenditure in the proportion of 1 to 7½ in the years 1801-2 to 1816-17."

Her debt had been run up to provide for the emergency of the French War. Her taxation had risen enormously. Her population was in a very poor and miserable condition after the rebellion of 1798, and her representatives in the Imperial Parliament were, for the most part, nominees of certain great houses, and were in that transition state which must result when a minor Parliament was merged in a larger body. Grattan made a few attempts to protest, but failed, and the result was that after the 5th January 1817, all revenue in Great Britain and Ireland was constituted a general fund called the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom, and that fund was charged with and indiscriminately applied to, (1) the services of the British and Irish Debt; (2) the Civil List (this was a question which might with great advantage be examined by the new Commission); (3) all other services previously charged in the separate consolidated funds of the two Kingdoms; and (4) Supply of the United Kingdom generally. He would now deal with the period between 1817 and 1853. He was glad to say that the period from 1817 up to 1853 was uneventful as regards taxation. It was clear that the statesmen of that day, and especially Sir R. Peel, living, he supposed, nearer to the Act of Union and with more cognisance of the views held by those who had negotiated that treaty, looked upon the bargain as one that ought to be kept as much as possible, not only in the spirit, but in the letter. The first point that cropped up was in 1842, when Sir R. Peel renewed the income tax in England, because he had to meet a deficit. It had been repealed in 1816, the year before the amalgamation of the debts, a curious circumstance which should be investigated. The object of renewing it in 1842 was to ease the taxation on the manufacturing interests in England, and the tax was not extended to Ireland for these reasons. Sir Robert Peel gave on this occasion a special reason for not extending the income tax to Ireland. He said, that

> "it was impossible to disregard the fact that although Ireland would benefit in some respects from the proposed remissions, yet that from the peculiar circumstances of Great Britain as compared to Ireland, the advantage of that course would not be chiefly for Ireland, but for this part of the United Kingdom."

He went on to prove this in some detail with regard to the remissions which it was then proposed to make, adding that he was led to the conclusion

> "that, from the remission of duties upon important manufactures, Great Britain would derive by far the greater advantage."

He now came to the most important period of all, except that of the Union, a period when all the precepts of the bargain between the two countries were set at nought, when all the wiser counsels of the time between 1817 and 1850 were forgotten, and when grave questions arose which must be faced. He referred to the taxation of 1853, and the reasons given for that taxation and at the same time the inaccurate statements which were made then, and had been made continuously since, with a view to proving that, though new taxes were being raised in Ireland, still so much was due from Ireland to England in the shape of advances that the two things balanced each other and that no hardship was inflicted. Mr. Childers summarised in his report the amount of fresh taxation which was imposed in Ireland from 1850 to 1860 and up to the present date. He said:—

> "Between 1820 and 1850 the Irish true revenue, without very great fluctuations, stood at about 5¼ millions. Subsequently to 1860 it has stood without great fluctuations at about 7½ millions. It may therefore be said that in this period about 2¼ millions per annum were added to the permanent taxation of Ireland;"

and as he compared it with the taxation from 1820 up to that date, that summary gave a very clear idea of the increase. The statement contained in the table furnished by Sir E. Hamilton in his evidence, also proved that the total tax revenue per head of population in Ireland was 13s. 11d. in 1849-50; and that it became £1 5s. 4d. between 1859 and 1860, an increase of nearly 80 per cent; while in Great Britain the increase was only from £2 7s. 8d. to £2 10s. per head. Again, to further substantiate the fact that a great increase of taxation was made, and unwisely made, at that period, there was the unanimous report of the Commissioners that the increase of the taxation was not justified by the then existing circumstances. The time chosen was most inopportune, and one might almost say heartless. Ireland was just recovering from the awful famine period, and though undoubtedly recovering, still the patient was weak and suffering. But—and he now came to the most important features of this new taxation, the Budget of 1853—Mr. Gladstone, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, gave the following reasons for his proposed action. That the income tax was to be temporary for seven years; that the principle of equality of taxation should be applied as between Great Britain and Ireland; that Ireland should share the burden of income tax with Great Britain, because she would benefit in the reduction on indirect taxation; and, lastly, he pointed out that as Ireland had suffered severely by the famine, as a set off the Exchequer proposed the remission of £4,000,000 due from Ireland to the Exchequer. This £4,000,000 was due for the establishment for the Poor Law Relief Measures of 1846-48. He would venture, with all humility, to try and disprove the justness of the conclusions arrived at by Mr. Gladstone, and he would try to show that unwittingly, and without any real desire to injure Ireland, he inflicted by that Budget a burden she was not called upon to bear. He must here return his best thanks to Mr. Synott, a gentleman who gave a most able lecture on this subject in Dublin last month. In the first place, we must remember the income tax became a permanent tax, and that it was raised to 16d. in 1856-57. Mr. Synott, in his paper, said:—

> "Comparing expectations and actual results, whilst Mr. Gladstone anticipated that the income tax in Ireland at 7d. would bring in £460,000, and, following out the same proportion, by the end of 1860 would have then produced a total of £2,692,000, I find that for the year ending 31st March 1855, the income tax collected in Ireland amounted to £823,839. In 1856 it produced £1,149,290, in 1857 £1,180,452, in 1858 £842,910, in 1859 £509,245, in 1860 £718,368, or a total for six years of £5,224,104, or as nearly as possible double the estimated amount. In all, Ireland has paid in income tax alone from 1853 to 1896 an average annual sum of £550,000, or a total of 23½ millions."

But Mr. Gladstone assumed that it was fair to impose this tax on Ireland because she had benefited by the remission of certain taxes between 1842 and 1850. The answer to that was that with the exception, he thought, of the Stamp Duties, which were lessened over both Kingdoms, and of the taxes taken off, nearly all were those affecting Great Britain only, and not Ireland. This could be proved from the Return of Mr. Chisholm, prepared in 1865, and also those furnished by the Inland Revenue to this Commission. Then they came to the so-called remission of 1853; and here the same operation of exempting Great Britain at the expense of the sister island was, he contended, and he regretted to have to say it, performed. Of a total of £5,322,000 remitted, £1,442,000 were taxes on Great Britain and England only. Of the balance, £3,900,000, Ireland got her proportion, about 1-10th or £390,000, while at the same time two and a-half millions were added as fresh taxation on Ireland. Now he came to what Mr. Gladstone called the "set off" of £4,000,000. A Committee of their Lordships' House had decided in 1853 that £2,000,000 of the Consolidated Annuities lent to Ireland should be remitted altogether, on the ground that it was for famine purposes, and because the works carried out under Government supervision had been wastefully and uselessly expended. Now Mr. Gladstone proposed that £4,000,000 of the Consolidated Annuities should be remitted, and he pointed out what a great boon this remission was, as the interest from this fund would have lasted in whole, or part, for 40 years, while the Income Tax would only last seven years. That was in 1853, and it was now 1897; and the Income Tax was still with us. What was perhaps as remarkable, was that the interest of the Consolidated Annuities was only £245,000, while the income that the Imperial Exchequer gained from the imposition of the Income Tax on Ireland was, as he had already pointed out, an average annual sum of £550,000, and a grand total of 23½ millions for the remission of four millions. This was not business, and he thought the Treasury might be heartily congratulated on the Budget Scheme of 1853. Whether they in Ireland have equal grounds for satisfaction he must leave their Lordships to decide. There was one point also that was worth noting. Ireland did not control the expenditure of the two or four millions spent in Poor Relief, apparently so wastefully, and Mr. Symott puts the case very tersely when he says:—

> "The imposition of the Income Tax in lieu of the Consolidated Annuities in fact amounted to this, that Great Britain having incurred, as she conceived a bad debt in one part of Ireland, got repayment from the more solvent parts of the country."

He came now to another point involved within this period, and which was constantly used by those who thought that their contention was not accurate, namely, the statement that loans had been often remitted to Ireland, and that, therefore, this compensation had been given indirectly or even directly for increased taxation. First of all it appeared that in the Treasury appendices, Vol. 1, p. 479, where the Returns were given of loans remitted, they had not only the £2,000,000 remitted in 1848 (half the Labour Rate advances) which he had dealt with, but also their old friend £4,000,000 of the Consolidated Annuities. These were not loans at all after 1853. He might just as well lend a friend £100 and ask him to pay him three per cent. and sinking fund with a view to extinguishing the loan, then after some time force him to pay instead an annual sum in excess of the interest and sinking fund for 50 years, and at the end of the 50 years debit him with the capital sum. But he would now go on to other loans supposed to have been remitted as per Treasury return. The sum of them is £10,376,534. Deduct the £2,000,000 of 1848 and the four million Consolidated Annuities and they found about £3,900,000 which were treated as remissions. It could be proved, and he thought conclusively, that these were not remissions. He would not weary their Lordships with details. There were one or two matters in this category of loans which had been transplanted by the Treasury, and not remitted, one to the Imperial Exchequer account for constabulary and one to the Irish Church Fund. On this latter transplant, the Treasury had been once more a gainer. But taking the whole sum indicated in this account there had been no remission, merely a transference or transplant. He was told on good authority, and as far as he could follow it himself, his authority was accurate, that under the Local Loans Act there was established a "Restitution Fund," by which these so-called remissions were being repaid by annual instalments. In these circumstances, he hardly thought that any compensation by virtue of remission could be claimed for increased taxation. He would now summarise, as shortly as possible, the various points he had brought forward in support of his contention. In the first place Ireland entered into a Treaty with Great Britain on certain terms as regards taxation. Have those terms been adhered to in the spirit and the letter? Up to 1853 they must consider that they were, but after that date they were departed from. The taxation, direct and indirect, imposed at that time on Ireland, was not accompanied by the abatements and exemptions necessitated by the circumstances of the case as set out in the Treaty. Again, had Ireland benefited under the Union in the manner that Mr. Pitt (its framer) intended? To a certain extent she had benefited. Had Ireland obtained since the Act of Union and the amalgamation of the Exchequer the "exemptions and abatements" which were the essence of the financial arrangements? Mr. Pitt said in the letter he had quoted that "if Ireland does not grow richer and more populous, she will by this scheme contribute nothing." She was certainly less populous, and all her rural districts are poorer, owing to the closing of corn mills, woollen factories, etc. Manufactories in ruins are seen in all directions. There had not been that growth of prosperity which had been developed so rapidly in Great Britain. Ireland was, therefore, to his mind, to a certain extent in the same condition as that contemplated when article 7 was written. Now there was one point which now cropped up and must be dealt with. It was asserted by opponents that though Ireland might pay more than her due proportion, having regard to her taxable capacity, still so much was expended on Ireland, according to the Treasury Return, that no injustice took place. He thought that he could prove in a few sentences the principle adopted by the Treasury in dealing with those Returns was illegal. The Treasury made out Returns dividing expenditure—he was only dealing with expenditure—under four heads—Imperial, English, Scottish, and Irish. Such discrimination was illegal and misleading. The law, as laid down by article 7, was that the expenditure was to be spread over the whole United Kingdom without discrimination, and the Statute 56 of George III., ch. 98, which dealt with the amalgamation of exchequers went still further as it recited, that the Consolidated Fund—that is the receipts from taxation—

> "shall be in like manner indiscriminately applied to the service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, or any part thereof, as shall be directed by Act of Parliament, and be issued and applied accordingly."

That was the legal aspect of the question, and he believed if they had in the constitution a Supreme Court, such as existed in America, that Ireland would be able to claim legally the fulfilment of this arrangement. But if one went into the financial aspect of this point, one found that the Treasury, by its division of expenditure, was obscuring the true issue. He would take two or three examples to convince their Lordships. The total Naval and Military expenditure 1893-94 was set out as £33,566,571. This was all called "Imperial." But the great amount of this expenditure was spent in England, where all the great factories existed. If the Treasury method was a fair finance method, Ireland and Scotland should only be charged with the portion spent within their borders. But under the Treasury Scheme they contributed in full proportion. He would take one other example—the Treasury Vote itself. This was classified as £37,520 Imperial, £39,972 English, £3,900 Scottish, and £5,500 Irish. If one turned to the Report one found that the Treasury salaries, amounting to about £75,000, were all earned and paid and spent in England. How did the Treasury evolve £37,520 (the Imperial) out of this total, and how did the Treasury manage to put its salaries half into an Imperial pocket and half into an English? These salaries were all earned in England, paid in England, and spent in England. This was the financial legerdemain practised by the Treasury. These examples showed the manipulation of figures, and he thought they proved that no reliance could be placed on the Treasury Returns as a basis of proof against their contention. They could, by shifting the figures, and by taking a separate entity here and an integral portion there, make a good or bad case as they chose. Logically, legally, and financially, Ireland was entitled to redress under the clause of "exemptions and abatements"—not as a beggar or suppliant, but as a suitor in the constitutional Court of the Empire. He might be asked, What is the remedy which you suggest? He would say this, The credit of this Empire stood higher than that of any other country in the world. Why not give Ireland the full advantage of that credit? Create, if they thought wise, an Irish Consolidated Fund, to be managed by Irish financiers—there were very capable men in Ireland—who knew the country and her necessities. Let that fund be utilised to promote her industries, agricultural and otherwise, and when the time came, as come it must, when Parliament had to create a local government for Ireland, with County Councils, let them also have the power to draw upon that resource. By such a scheme they would inflict absolutely no hardship on any taxpayer within these two islands. The fund could be secured, as far as the Treasury was concerned, on the whole resources of Ireland. Britain with her credit could give it at a low rate of interest, and the repayment of the instalments might be for a lengthened period. He thought if that could be done they would find that the pressure of indirect taxation, because they were poorer, as industries increased and the influx of capital assisted them and made them more prosperous, would feel that pressure less, and he also thought, and was almost convinced, that the time would come, and that pretty soon, too, when this Parliament would be able to expunge the words "exemptions and abatements" for Ireland and Scotland out of the financial history of Great Britain.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE): There is, of course, no objection to the Motion which the noble Lord has put upon the Paper. The terms of reference, as he is, no doubt, aware, have already been communicated to the other House of Parliament, and there can be no sort of reason why they should not be made known to this House also. Having listened attentively to his speech—which might not inappropriately take its place in the Blue-book as one more supplementary report upon the financial relations question—I am in some doubt whether the noble Lord agrees or does not agree with the Government in thinking that the case is one in which further inquiry is necessary. For that, after all, is the question. I think your Lordships must all have been struck by the remarkable moderation of his tone—["hear, hear"]—and some of us, perhaps, may have contrasted it mentally with another speech which the noble Lord delivered in Ireland during the Recess, and which was, perhaps, not quite so remarkable for the same quality. [*A laugh.*] We are sometimes told that the atmosphere of this House is depressing upon those who have to address it, and it is, perhaps, owing to that circumstance we were deprived of the pleasure of listening to some of that more fervid and exuberant eloquence which the noble Lord's audience at Cork had the good fortune to hear. [*Laughter.*] The circumstances were remarkable. A Royal Commission, comprising members of great reputation and eminence, members who represented different departments of administration in this country, members with experience of political life in the Colonies and India, representatives of commercial and financial interests, and gentlemen connected with Ireland, had joined, or the majority of them had joined, in reporting to Parliament that in their opinion Ireland contributed to the Imperial Exchequer a larger sum than we had a right to demand from her. It was, surely, natural that under such circumstances there were pleasant anticipations of an immediate lightening of the burden with, perhaps, the payment of a few odd millions by way of reparation. Here was a new platform on which the old differences were to disappear, a platform on which Home Rulers and Unionists, landlords and tenants might unite their forces and advance in a solid phalanx upon the Treasury. But Her Majesty's Government were obliged to consider the situation in a more calculating and cold-blooded fashion, and to remember that in this matter not only the interests of the Irish taxpayers were involved, but also those of the taxpayers of the rest of the United Kingdom, and that the question was one which concerned not only the financial but the political relations of the two countries. We had to bear in mind, too, that no Royal Commission, however eminent, could in such a case relieve Parliament or the Government of the day which owes its existence to the confidence of Parliament from its responsibility. [*Opposition cheers.*] I shall not say one disrespectful word as to the composition of the Royal Commission or as to the ability of the Papers which it has produced, but I do say that if the eminent men of whom it was composed had deliberately set to work to lay their verdict before the public in a shape calculated to give it a minimum of authority they could not have been more successful. I remember, and noble Lords connected with Ireland will not have forgotten it, a Commission, presided over by the late Lord Bessborough, of which Mr. Gladstone observed that it had produced not a Report, but a litter of Reports. This Royal Commission has produced a litter of Reports, and an even more numerous litter than that of the Bessborough Commission. It comprises altogether no less than nine documents. There is the so-called Final Joint Report of the Commissioners; there is the Chairman's Report signed by himself and only four out of his twelve colleagues; there is the Report signed by the two noble Lords opposite and by the late Mr. Bertram Currie; there is the separate Memorandum by Lord Welby; there is the Report of the three Commissioners who may be regarded as specially representing Irish interests; there is the separate Memorandum by one of those Members; there are two separate Reports signed by Sir David Barbour and Sir Thomas Sutherland, each of them very weighty and well-reasoned Papers; and, finally, there is the draft Report of the late Mr. Childers, who, unfortunately, died before the labours of the Commission were accomplished. Those who navigate a stream which divides itself into so many channels may be forgiven if they find occasionally themselves lost amidst its intricacies, or stick fast upon the shoals which they encounter at every point. Let me say a word with regard to the main Report, that which is, I think, not very felicitously described as the "Final Joint" Report of the Commissioners. It is difficult to discover in it any elements of finality, and it is scarcely a "Joint Report," inasmuch as the signatures of two conspicuous members of the Commission are not attached to it. It is a despairing effort at unanimity, and the circumstances under which it is written are described with much frankness in the draft Report prepared by Mr. Blake. This is what he says:—

> "It has been thought impossible to construct a detailed 'joint' report which should reconcile our differences of view on some questions, or which should do justice to the varying shades of opinion and diverse chains of reasoning of the several Commissioners on many points on which there is yet in the result a great approach to substantial agreement."

There is room for doubt with regard to the "substantial agreement," but there is no room for doubt as to the "differences of view" or the "varying shades of opinion" and "diverse chains of reasoning." Let us, however, see how far the "Final" Report of the Commissioners carries us. It is a document of extraordinary brevity, for it comprises less than two pages of printed matter. Of these one page and a half are occupied by a recital of the circumstances under which the Commission was appointed, and of the terms of reference and the circumstances under which the inquiry took place. The Report, however, contributes one admission of great importance and five propositions which are described as "points of general agreement." The admission is that which is contained in the fourth paragraph, which runs as follows:—

> "The terms of reference that were drawn up for our guidance were probably dictated by the fact that the investigation was contemplated in connection with the Home Rule Bill of 1893, the financial arrangements of which were proposed to be at first of a temporary character, their final adjustment being left undecided until after the results of our inquiry were made known."

It is, I think, impossible to overrate the importance of that admission, for it shows that the Commission was appointed upon the assumption that Ireland was to be given a separate political as well as a separate financial system, and that the Royal Commissioners by whom the Report is signed considered themselves bound to proceed upon that assumption. ["Hear, hear!"] I come now to the five conclusions upon which the Royal Commissioners are agreed. Two of them may be described as of merely historial interest. We are told that the Act of Union imposed upon Ireland a burden which, as events showed, she was unable to bear, and that the increased taxation laid upon Ireland between 1853 and 1860 was not justified by the then existing circumstances. Whether those propositions are stated in the most accurate and appropriate language is, I think, open to question. The inability of Ireland to bear the burden laid upon her by the

Act of Union was mainly due to the enormous expense to which this country was put by the great war—a burden which taxed the resources of the wealthier partner, and was intolerable to the poorer. I think it should also be added that, if the taxation imposed between 1853—

*LORD CASTLETOWN: I only pointed out that an increase of taxation was put upon Ireland which at that moment was a very severe burden upon her. But I also clearly pointed out that, as far as the question of indirect taxation goes, I am perfectly convinced that the Irishman must stand exactly on the same footing as the Englishman and the Scotchman.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: I was merely going to say that if the increased taxation laid upon Ireland between 1853 and 1860 pressed upon her with undue severity it was mainly because she had not at that time recovered from the exhaustion occasioned by the famine, so that no moment could have been more inopportune for adding to her financial burdens; but neither of these propositions touches the real question, which is, not whether Ireland paid too much at the beginning of the century or 40 years ago, but whether she pays too much now. Then the Royal Commissioners announce to us that identity of rates of taxation does not necessarily involve equality of burden. I do not imagine that the Royal Commissioners would take credit to themselves for this as a new and startling discovery. It is, if I may be forgiven for saying so, a commonplace; no one will dispute it, and it does not add to our knowledge. There remain two statements, which are virtually the beginning and end of the main Report. The proposition that Great Britain and Ireland are to be considered for the purpose of this inquiry as separate entities, and the proposition that, while the taxable capacity of Ireland is one-twentieth of that of Great Britain, the actual tax revenue of Ireland is one-eleventh of that of Great Britain. And first, with regard to the separate entity proposition. There has never been an expression over which so much controversy has raged. To some persons the words are a solace; to others they are a veritable red rag. Our difficulty lies in this, that there is nothing in the joint Report to show what the Royal Commissioners mean when they talk of Ireland as a "separate entity." I am not here to contend that, for purposes of statistical comparison, Ireland may not, in one sense of the words, be regarded as a "separate entity." No one will, I suppose, deny that an indiscriminate system of taxation may operate unequally upon different parts of the same country, or that, in the imposition of taxation, a prudent financier should always take care that no tax presses with undue severity upon a particular section of the community, whether that section be represented by a class or by a geographical area; nor will it be disputed that, when the limits within which the class is distributed coincide with a well-defined geographical area, the inequality, if there is one, becomes more marked and the sense of wrong more acute. These considerations must obviously apply with peculiar force in the case of Ireland, and if we mean that the two countries should start with a common system of taxation, and that we should then, having regard to all these considerations, ask whether that system presses inequitably upon Ireland, we need not, I think, quarrel with those who describe Ireland as a "separate entity." I would go even further, and say that, to deny to her the position of a separate entity in this sense is to fly in the face of facts. Not a year passes without some legislation of special application to Ireland, and I think it may be fairly said that, in proportion as her individuality in such respects is a marked individuality, she has a stronger claim to separate consideration for fiscal purposes. That is, I believe, the principle embodied in that clause of the Act of Union to which reference has been made, the clause under which Ireland, starting with a common exchequer, is entitled to particular exemptions and abatements, provided she is able to establish a claim to them, and it is upon this same principle that we proceed when, in again referring the question to a new Royal Commission, we desire them to report

> "Whether, when regard is had to the nature of the taxes now in force, to existing exemptions, and to the amount of expenditure by the State on local services, the provision in the Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland, with regard to 'particular exemptions or abatements' calls for any modification in the financial system of the United Kingdom."

I cannot resist quoting in this connection the opinions expressed in well-chosen language by the Belfast Chamber of Commerce in a recently published report of their Council:—

> "Having carefully examined the constitutional aspects of the question, we have to say that in our opinion Great Britain and Ireland must be treated as two countries which have a common financial system. It would seem to us that the ultimate object of the Act of Union was (subject to certain provisions by which the interests of the poorer country were safeguarded and which apply to Scotland as well as to Ireland) to establish a financial system common both to Great Britain and to Ireland. What was contemplated by the Act of Union, and what was in point of fact carried out through the amalgamation of the Exchequers of Great Britain and Ireland in the year 1817, was that the revenue of the United Kingdom should be contributed to a common fund, and that all expenditure should be met from that fund. We are, consequently, most strongly of opinion that to hold that in the present day and for the future Great Britain and Ireland must be treated as separate financial entities, except for the purpose of considering the particular exemptions or abatements to be made in Ireland whenever circumstances require them, would be contrary to the intention and provisions of the Act of Union. By the 7th article of the Act of Union provision, repeated and re-enacted in the Act of 1816, was made for certain particular exemptions and abatements in Ireland and Scotland, if it should at any time appear that from any cause the incidence of an indiscriminate and equal taxation should press with undue severity on either of these countries. It thus appears that Ireland was and is entitled to special consideration in fiscal matters, and that it was never contemplated or intended by the Legislature that such claim should become extinct."

Here we have stated with admirable clearness the two propositions which will, I hope, be universally accepted—that the two countries are to remain under a common financial system, but that the incidence of that system on the poorer country should be carefully considered. It is upon those propositions that we found ourselves when in referring the question to a new Commission we desire it to report whether, when regard is had to the nature of the taxes now in force, to existing exemptions, and to the amount of expenditure by the State on local services, the provision in the Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland, with regard to "particular exemptions or abatements," calls for any modification in the financial system of the United Kingdom. It is, however, perfectly clear that when the Royal Commissioners or the majority of them talk of a "separate entity" they mean a great deal more than this. If we want to find out what they do mean we must look to the separate Reports. I turn to that of the two noble Lords opposite. They tell us that the policy of applying equal rates of taxation to all parts of Great Britain—a policy which had been kept in view since the Union—can no longer be regarded as the leading principle of financial legislation. It was the principle of financial legislation. It was the principle for which Sir Stafford Northcote and Mr. Lowe contended, but that principle has been "given up," and it is, they add—

> "abundantly clear that of the two conflicting theories, viz., that which regards Great Britain and Ireland as one country for the purpose of taxation and expenditure, and the other, which regards Great Britain and Ireland as separate partners—the second is the one upon which their instructions are founded."

Pressing their conclusion to extremities, they suggest that we should "put upon the Irish people the duty of levying their own taxes and of providing for their own expenditure," and, in order to leave us in no doubt as to their meaning, they contemplate the possibility of the imposition of new Customs duties in Ireland—a result in which they would acquiesce, believing as they do that in Ireland, as in the colonies, "freedom is a greater good than free trade." The language of Mr. Sexton and his colleagues upon this part of the case is still more outspoken; for they base their argument on the assumption that "what is contemplated" by the reference to the Commission "can only be the transfer of control over Irish finance to an Irish Legislature." It is impossible to read these documents without coming to the conclusion that the Royal Commissioners, or at any rate those who were responsible for the major part of the printed matter contained in the Blue-book, had made up their minds that Ireland was to be treated as a separate entity, not in any restricted sense of the words, but in their widest and most far-reaching sense, and that, instead of starting with a common system of taxation, we were to regard Ireland as associated with this country as a quasi-independent partner, entitled to a political and therefore to a fiscal system of her own. That contention, be it sound or unsound, is open to the fatal objection that the people of this country have decided in the most emphatic manner against it, and it is because we believe that this inquiry, founded as it was upon a Home Rule basis, and pointing as it does, if it points anywhere, to a Home Rule solution, is suspect as to its origin and as to the direction in which it leads us, that we decline, without supplementary inquiry, to follow its lead. ["Hear, hear!"] We may be asked why, if we accept the interpretation of the Act of Union given by the Belfast Chamber of Commerce, and if we admit that under it Ireland is entitled to special exemptions and abatements, we do not proceed at once to determine what those exemptions and abatements should be? The answer to that is, I think, that it is easy to admit the principle, but that the difficulty of applying it to existing circumstances is enormous, and that we stand in need of fuller and more authoritative information than any which has been vouchsafed to us by the Royal Commission before we can make the attempt. Let me indicate to the House one, at least, of the more obvious difficulties of dealing off-hand with this question of abatements and exemptions. If there is an Irish financial grievance, the difficulty does not lie in putting one's finger upon it. I suppose I shall not be contradicted when I affirm that the burden of direct taxation does not press with undue severity on Ireland. There is no complaint as to the direct taxes, and, indeed, it can be shown that, if the proper proportion of Irish contribution to the common revenue is 1-21st, their contribution under the head of direct taxation falls considerably below that figure. The grievance, if there is one, is that the payer of indirect taxation is the consumer of dutiable commodities, under which head we are told Ireland pays more than her proper proportion. Now, we have a right to ask in what manner it is possible to give relief to the consumers of taxable commodities by means of abatements and exemptions. It should never be forgotten that this reservation had a very different meaning at the time when it was made to that which we can attach to it now. At the time of the Union there was a tariff which included some 3,000 different commodities. It is obvious that in such a case a tariff apparently indiscriminate might in effect press with undue severity upon numerous articles produced in or consumed by one or another part of the United Kingdom. But we have changed all that. At present you can count upon the fingers of one hand the dutiable articles upon which the indirect taxation of Ireland is levied. I search in vain throughout these reports for a practical suggestion as to the manner in which the grievance of the payer of indirect taxation in Ireland, if he has one, can be remedied. Is it not clear that the grievance of the Irish consumer is also the grievance of the English and Scotch consumer of the same commodities? If the drinker of whisky pays more than his share of the revenue, he does so whether he lives on this or on the other side of the Channel. Are we going to reduce the duties on the tea, tobacco, and whisky consumed in Ireland and to make good the loss by increased taxation for the rest of the United Kingdom? I fancy my friends from Scotland would have something to say about that. I read with interest a letter written by Lord Farrer to *The Times* at the beginning of the year, in which he passed in review the different courses of action which are open to us, and summed up strongly against any proposal to reduce Irish taxation and to raise British taxation so as to compensate the common fund for the Irish reduction. Such a scheme, he says, is not one to which the British taxpayer is likely to submit. ["Hear, hear!"] Nor can any one read the report signed by himself and Lord Welby without feeling the irresistible force of their argument that it would be out of the question to undertake a general revision of the system of taxation accepted by a population of 33 millions in order to meet the convenience of a population of less than five millions. But let us for a moment assume that we have overcome all these difficulties. Let us assume that a case has been made out for relieving Ireland to the extent of, say, £2,000,000, either by the remission of indirect taxes or by an equivalent grant intended to make good the difference between what she pays and what she ought to pay. Does anyone believe that such an arrangement would provide a permanent solution of the difficulty? Is it not on the contrary obvious that your readjustment would be entirely at the mercy of the consumers of the commodities? It might be fair to-day, but it might be unfair three years hence. If the times improved, and the consumer consumed a larger amount of whisky or of tea, or of tobacco, the Irish contribution would again part company from its proper proportion, the grievance would reappear, and another revision would be demanded and supported by the same arguments as those which can now be adduced. ["Hear, hear!"] I cannot resist calling the attention of the House to the interesting and humorous passage in the report of Sir Thomas Sutherland, in which this aspect of the case is dealt with. "These indirect taxes," he says,

> "are paid by the mass in both countries; the expenditure involved is a voluntary one on the part of individuals for their comforts and enjoyment. . . . The problem submitted to the Commission, when looked at from a practical point of view, is really to draw a fundamental distinction between the consumers of whisky and tobacco in Ireland and their fellow subjects in Great Britain, and to allocate the burden of taxation, not according to consumption, but in acordance with some theory of relative capacity on the part of the different classes of population of the United Kingdom to acquire that which is actually and voluntarily consumed, enjoyed, and paid for." "The penalty of spirits," he says, "depends on the amount consumed, and the grievance of the whisky consumer may also be mitigated on this particular point by the amount of water which he uses with his spirits. Of course no right-minded man will insult good whisky with too much water, but yet it may be admitted that the discrepancy in the alcoholic tax on beer and spirits will be toned down and attenuated by such an admixture of the natural element as will produce a wholesome and refreshing beverage."

[*Laughter.*] Your Lordships will not fail to observe that, if it is possible for the consumer to mitigate his grievance by increasing the proportion of water employed, it would also be within his power at any moment to increase the grievance by diminishing the water and adding to the spirit. We can almost picture to ourselves a patriotic toper compounding artistically the agreeable ingredients of the national beverage, and consoling himself, as he diminishes the water and increases the alcohol, by the reflection that he is not only improving the quality of the punch, but laying, I will not say a strong, but a liquid, foundation for a new claim upon the Exchequer of the United Kingdom. [*Cheers and laughter.*] These are conditions which do not appear to me to hold out much hope of a final settlement of the difficulty upon these lines, and the Royal Commission has given us no help towards solving the difficulty. If the finding of the Commission fail to enlighten us on these points, it is still more inconclusive in regard to another and an even more important branch of the question. They tell us that Ireland is to be treated as a separate financial entity, and that too much is taken from her in the shape of revenue, but they have omitted to tell us how much of the revenue so received goes back to Ireland in the shape of expenditure upon objects which are distinctly Irish. The Commissioners have told us that Ireland ought to pay 1-21st of the total revenue, and that she pays, in their estimation, 1-11th, but they have not told us that she receives beyond the proportion to which she would be arithmetically entitled, an amount which reduces her net contribution to something like 1-32nd part of the whole. We shall perhaps be told during the course of this Debate why this point was passed over in the main Report. I think it is clear that the terms of the reference would have warranted the Commission in dealing with it, and the Commissioners, or most of them, were conscious of the fact. I can, indeed, attach no other meaning to the concluding paragraph of the reference in which the Commissioners were directed

> "to report as to the charge for Irish purposes on the Imperial Exchequer, the amount for Irish taxation remaining available for contribution to the Imperial expenditure to which it is considered equitable that Ireland should contribute."

It is, however, remarkable in the face of these instructions that the point is entirely ignored in the main Report. The other Reports, however, contain significant references to it, pointing out the necessity for doing the very thing we propose to do—namely, to clear the question up by means of a further inquiry. The Report of the Chairman and others, adopting the words of Mr. Childers, states that—

> "The nature of the public expenditure in Ireland and the possibiltiy of reducing it may be a very proper subject for a separate inquiry."

In the Report of the noble Lords opposite it is admitted that—

> "this expenditure has to be taken into account; however little may be its value to the poorer partner it is not the less a loss to the richer partner."

Sir David Barbour reasons with much effect in the same sense. He says,

> "It has been argued that Ireland should be treated as a financial unit for purposes of revenue, but not for purposes of expenditure. I am not aware of any good grounds on which such a distinction in dealing with Irish revenue and Irish expenditure can be justified, and I feel sure that if the facts were different and the expenditure for Irish purposes were less than what could be claimed in proportion either to her resources or her revenue, the argument would be inverted, and it would be alleged that Ireland was entitled to be treated as a financial unit for purposes of expenditure."

And he comes to the conclusion that

> "there appears to be *primâ facie* a strong case for inquiry into the necessity for the existing scale of expenditure in Ireland."

The case is, it seems to me, stated unanswerably by Professor Henry Sidgwick, who said in his evidence,

> "There is much to be said for refusing the inquiry how much of Imperial taxation is received from Ireland or how much is spent in Ireland, but there is, I conceive, nothing to be said in favour of liberally investigating the former question while refusing to consider the latter."

And I should be inclined to add that the more those gentlemen claim separate consideration for the financial position of Ireland, the more they insist on abatements and exemptions in favour of Ireland, the more necessary it becomes that consideration should not be limited to one portion only of the financial field, but that the whole of it should be included within our purview, and that we should take into account, as indeed I apprehend the Act of Union must have intended, not only what Ireland gives but what she receives. Had I not felt that this Debate was to some extent academical, I should have asked the House to consider other points on which I have not touched, for example, the conjectural character of many of the figures upon which the calculations of the Royal Commission are based, the fact that Ireland does already receive exceptional treatment in many respects, the improvement which has taken place, and is taking place, in her financial condition in spite of the alleged drain upon her resources. But I hope I have said enough to show that it would be impossible for us without further inquiry to deal with the grave questions which the Commission has raised, questions which affect not only the finances of Ireland, but the interest of the taxpayers of all parts of the United Kingdom, and the political relations of the two countries. These Reports contain much that is interesting and ingenious, but some of the most important points have, in our estimation, either been neglected or dealt with in such a manner as not to leave them mature for settlement. For these reasons we think further inquiry is necessary, and we shall endeavour to make it as complete as possible. And we shall, I can assure my noble Friend, consider the final verdict, when we obtain it, with the strictest regard to the covenants of the Act of Union and with no want of sympathy for any demands which can be shown to fall within the spirit as well as the letter of the treaty. [*Cheers.*]

LORD FARRER said that he did not think that the English members of the Commission had any reason to be discontented with the progress that had been made upon this very difficult question. When he referred to the English Commissioners, he ought to have said the survivors of them, he himself and another noble Lord sitting behind him being the sole survivors among them. They had lost Mr. Childers, Sir Robert Hamilton, and Mr. Bertram Currie, all of whom were most valuable members of the Commission. ["Hear, hear!"] When he said that the English members of the Commission had no reason to be discontented with the progress that had been made with reference to this question he meant that the inquiries which the Government proposed to make brought into prominence the points which they had called attention to. The first item of inquiry was,

> "How much of the total expenditure which the State provides may properly be considered to be expenditure common to England, Scotland, and Ireland; and what share of such common expenditure each country is contributing after the amount expended on local services has been deducted from its true revenue?"

In reference to this item the Treasury had already given, in the Returns laid annually before Parliament, ample information, and he doubted whether another inquiry would carry them much further. With regard to the great items of naval and military expenditure, it was contended in the separate Report of the Irish members of the Commission that Ireland ought not to contribute to them in the same proportion as England and Scotland, because she did not derive the same advantages from those services that England and Scotland did, and, moreover, that the money was expended in the two latter countries and not in the first. The second item of inquiry was:—

> "How the expenditure on Irish local services which the State wholly or in part provides, compares with the corresponding expenditure in England and in Scotland; and whether such Irish expenditure may with advantage be re-adjusted or reduced."

This was an item upon which further information was certainly required. But he ventured to suggest that a Treasury Return would give them all the information that was required upon the point. Were they to have a Royal Commission inquiring into the cost of every English, Scotch and Irish Department and comparing them with each other? Such an inquiry would probably outlive most of the members of the Commission, and most certainly it would outlive the present Government. [*Laughter.*] The third item of inquiry was a serious one. The noble Lord had read it, but he would read it again. It was:—

> "Whether, when regard is had to the nature of the taxes now in force, to the existing exemptions, and to the amount of expenditure by the State on local services, the provisions in the Act of Union between Great Britian and Ireland with regard to particular exemptions or abatements calls for any modification in the financial system of the United Kingdom."

That appeared to him to be an entirely inadequate reference. It confined the Commissioners to an inquiry into the effect of that particular clause in the Act of Union which related to abatements and exemptions. Too much had already been made of that clause. It was really a subordinate clause to the great clause which provided for the future finance of the two countries. The real question that would have to be faced was, whether the financial arrangements introduced by the Act of Union operated justly and properly as between the two countries. There was no doubt what the principle of these arrangements really was. The great object of the promoters of the Act of Union was to arrive at a system of common taxation and common expenditure—one common purse, into which taxes were to be paid indiscriminately, and out of which the whole of the Imperial expenditure was to be made indiscriminately. Taking the question of expenditure first, the noble Lord and the Irish Members were perfectly right in saying that, under the Act of Union, there was no right to discriminate between expenditure in Ireland and expenditure in Great Britain and the common expenditure of the Empire. The Act of Union contemplated indiscriminate expenditure. On the question of taxation, nothing was clearer than the object of Mr. Pitt and Lord Castlereagh. In the first place, they were extremely careful to make each country contribute its quota, and that Ireland should not contribute more than its quota. Their calculations, however, proved insufficient, and Ireland was overtaxed, though that was not their intention. The only thing that prevented their proposing identical taxation was the state of the debts of the two countries. Subject to that, they contemplated as final and permanent, an arrangement under which both countries should pay identically the same taxes, and that the expenditure should be indiscriminate. The noble Marquess had jeered a little at the statement in the Report that identical rates of taxation did not necessarily mean equality of burden. He treated it as if it were a platitude. If it were it was a platitude which was unknown to Mr. Pitt and Lord Castlereagh, to the statesmen who amalgamated the Exchequers in 1817, to any of the statesmen who provided for the taxation of Great Britain from that time to 1860, or to Mr. Gladstone, Sir George Lewis, and Mr. Disraeli when they levelled up the taxation of Ireland to the taxation of Great Britain; and it was unknown to those who argued that individuals and not areas ought to be taxed; and it pervaded the arguments of Mr. Lowe and Sir Stafford Northcote on the subject, and much of the argument that prevailed at the present time. He could quote passages without end to show that Mr. Pitt and Lord Castlereagh intended that Ireland should be taxed according to its means. Speaking on February 5, 1800, Lord Castlereagh said:—

> "It were to be wished that there was not an insurmountable bar to a common system and a common Treasury; and we could become like countries of the same kingdom, subject to the same system of finances. Were our entire expenditure common (which would happen if neither kingdom had any separate debts, or if their debts were in proportion to their ability), by no system whatever could they be made to contribute so strictly according to their means as by being subject to the same taxes equally bearing upon the great objects of taxation in both countries."

The language of Article 7 of the Act of Union strictly carried out that intention of Lord Castlereagh. The intention was that taxes should be common. No doubt there was an intention behind that, that Ireland should not be taxed above her capacity; but those statesmen did not say, nor was it asserted for 50 years afterwards, that identical taxation might impose on Ireland a burden far in excess of her capacity. The question, therefore, was whether the financial arrangements of the Act of Union had been fair and right as between the two countries. How did matters stand at present? Before the speech of the noble Marquess he would have said, from the answer of Mr. Balfour in the House of Commons, that the Government were willing to accept the taxable capacity of Ireland as agreed on by the majority of the Commission. If that were so, Ireland was undoubtedly taxed beyond her capacity to the extent of two or three millions a year. His own conviction, founded not so much on figures and arguments as upon the general evidence concerning the population of Ireland and their employment, was, that the taxable capacity of Ireland, in proportion to that of Great Britain, was considerably less than 1 in 20. Had Great Britain profited by the excess of taxation in Ireland? That was very far from being the case. From 1785 to 1817 the true Irish revenue was, to that of Great Britain, as 1 to 13. From 1820 to 1880 it varied from one-tenth to one-eighth, and from 1890 to 1896 it fell to the proportion of about 1 in 12. Then, as to contributions, from 1785 to 1791, Ireland's proportion was as 1 to 21. From 1820 to 1830, after the amalgamation of the Exchequers, it was as 1 to 12. In 1850 it had fallen as low as 1 to 18; in 1860, after the extension of taxation in Ireland, it rose to as much as 1 in 10, and from 1860 to 1896 it had fallen to 1 in 32. That did not look as if the present state of things was very profitable to the British taxpayer. There had been a steady fall since 1860, save in one exceptional year, and the fall was continuing. Taking figures, in 1850 the true revenue was 4¾ millions; in 1860 it had risen to 7¾ millions, and in 1896 to 8 millions. As to contributions, in 1850 they were 2½ millions; in 1860, 5 1-3 millions, and in 1896 they had fallen to two millions, or three millions less than before the great extension of taxation in Ireland. The reason was the enormous increase in the local expenditure upon Ireland. That expenditure was, in 1860, 2¼ millions, and by 1896 it had increased to six millions. The result was, that if Ireland had contributed to the common expenditure of the Empire in the proportion of 1 to 20, she would have contributed in 1894 one million, and in 1896 1 1-3rd millions more than she actually did. Consequently the increase in taxation had not benefited the taxpayer in Great Britain. The contrary was the case, and the taxpayer in Great Britain was worse off. In addition to all this expenditure there was something like £10,000,000 or more of remitted loans or grants. He had looked very carefully to see what remedies were suggested, especially by Unionist Members. He had been very much interested in the Report of the Belfast Chamber of Commerce, to which reference had been made. After insisting on the financial unity of the two countries the Report said:—

> "But Ireland is entitled to special consideration in fiscal matters. The incidence of present taxation does press with undue severity on the poorer classes of the people of Ireland. For a considerable number of years Ireland has paid in taxation a sum largely in excess of that which she would have been called upon to pay had her taxation been in the exact proportion to her resources. The annual expenditure for Irish purposes has been in excess of what it would have been if Ireland's expenditure as well as her taxation had been fixed in exact proportion to her taxable capacity. . . Ireland has a claim on the Imperial Parliament for special treatment in the matter of a wise and liberal expenditure in the direction in which it can be arranged to be really reproductive."

Then there was suggested the relief of local burdens, the establishment, on broad and generous lines, of an Agricultural Department, technical education, the development of inland communication, and the carrying out of such public works as could be shown to be productive and of permanent advantage to the people of Ireland. He wondered how the British taxpayer would like that? It was a continuance and extension of the policy which this country had been pursuing towards Ireland since 1860. Had it answered? Let the Irish Reports and the Irish people answer. But the Belfast Chamber of Commerce was not alone; an article in *The Edinburgh Review*, after a fair account on the subject of taxation, ended by stating that "Ireland is poor, let us give more to Ireland." Even *The Times*, with an angry howl of he did not know how many columns on the subject of the Commission, ends with a whine for money for poor Ireland. This was a miserable policy. He was an old-fashioned economist, and he did not like the doles which were now in fashion. He thought that they were a very dangerous form of expenditure, and they seldom conferred good on the objects to whom they were given. He was sure, with the enormous drafts on our resources caused by our naval and military expenditure, with even the possibility of a great war impending, that the policy was a fatal and dangerous one. It was especially dangerous and fatal in the case of Ireland. What they needed as between the two countries was mutual respect for one another. They would never arrive at that end by treating Ireland as a dependent pauper. He was convinced that the very worst direction in which they could seek a remedy for the evils of the excessive taxation of Ireland was an excessive expenditure on Ireland. He spoke his own opinion, and it was an opinion arrived at in spite of his own predilections to the contrary—an opinion founded not certainly on any prejudice in favour of Home Rule, but founded simply on the financial considerations which came before the Commissioners; and his conviction was that the only remedy for these evils would have to be found in settling—and he would do it on the most liberal basis towards Ireland—what Ireland ought to contribute to the common expenses of the Empire; and then to leave her to manage her own moneys in her own way, and to get the benefit of her own economies. That he believed to be the only sound policy; and it was to that we should have to come in the end. ["Hear, hear!"]

Lord MORRIS said he had listened, as an Irishman, with great pain to the speech of the noble Lord opposite. When entering public life 34 years ago he came to the conclusion that Ireland was overtaxed, and that this was the real and burning question as to the poverty and the condition of Ireland. When the Royal Commission was appointed he felt, as a Unionist, greatly alarmed, for he found it was rather packed with Home Rulers. All the financial experts on the Commission were pronounced Home Rulers, but they had been forced to come to the conclusion that Ireland was overtaxed to the extent of between £2,000,000 and £3,000,000. That was a good start to make from the Irish point of view, but it was met by the suggestion of the noble Lord opposite that Ireland only contributed 2½ millions to the Imperial Exchequer. This was found by applying as local expenditure to Ireland matters of Imperial expenditure. The Irish constabulary, for example, was put down as a local item to be paid, and it amounted to £1,500,000. He wished the great lights of the Cobden Club would explain upon what reason or why it was that Ireland had gone down in population in the last 50 years as it had. Its population in 1846 was 8½ millions, it was now 4½ millions, an event which he believed was not recorded in the history of any civilised country except when decimated by war; it had never occurred in time of peace. The truth was, that in the 18th century Ireland was ruined by commercial restrictions; in the 19th it was ruined by Free Trade. Take the real Imperial resources of the country. The broad area of Ireland was about 21 million acres. In 1846 seven and a-half millions, or just above one-third of the area of Ireland, were under crops; four and a-half millions were under cereal crops, and three million acres under green crops and flax. How did the case stand in 1896? There were not one and a-half million acres under cereal crops now, and only one and a-quarter acres under green crops. In other words, there were not three million acres of crops in Ireland in

1896, as compared with seven and a-half millions 50 years ago. As Peel prophesied—differing from most political prophets who, according to his experience, were almost always wrong—Free Trade had indeed been injurious to Ireland. Any intelligent child of five could see it, because, if Ireland had a protected market in England, surely it must have been an advantage to the former country. What happened Lord Castletown had already called attention to. Mr. Gladstone, the great fiscal and financial enemy of Ireland, was the person who initiated the system of increasing the taxation of Ireland, and it was admitted now, upon the report of six or seven of his most extreme followers, that the time was inopportune, and that the circumstances did not justify it. Well, if they did not justify it, why was this increased taxation kept up? Were the circumstances now changed? No; the circumstances were much worse. The taxation was increasing. Was ever such a thing heard of, that as a people and their resources disappeared, taxation increased? Sydney Smith said, "There are two things certain in life, death and taxes." They were entitled to both. They could not avoid the one, but they in Ireland would try not to have too much of the other. A very good example of the way in which Ireland was dealt with was afforded by the case of the Irish Church. In the abolition of the Irish Church Mr. Gladstone saved the Treasury of this country £70,000 a year; which capitalised, would represent a sum of about three millions sterling. Could anyone really defend the sort of nibbling at the resources of Ireland in the way in which the Church Fund had been dealt with—a fund which, they were told in the preamble of the Act, was to be a "sacred fund" kept up for particular and pressing necessities? The patience even of a judicial person was sometimes put to the test when he heard of all the loans made to Ireland and the advances made to Ireland, and to find, when he examined into the case, that they were all given out of the Irish Church Fund. Yet he was asked, "Aren't you astonished at the liberality of the Good Samaritan?" What was the answer to the Report of the Commission? One of the answers was the whisky argument. He thought that had rather been drunk out. [*A laugh.*] The statement that the incidence of taxation was not always the same did not show itself equal in effect upon particular areas. A great philosopher had said, that that which is just is equal, but what is equal may not be always just. Accordingly, the whisky argument he had not heard adduced to-night except when the noble Marquess read some passages from Sir Thomas Sutherland's statement, apparently to cheer up a rather gloomy speech. If the state of the case were that Ireland was overtaxed, it was no answer to say, "Oh! but we expend a great deal of money in Ireland." That was no answer at all. The fact remained that, treated as a separate entity—and if they were to enter into the financial relations between two things, they must for the nonce be treated as separate—Ireland stood in the position of being overtaxed to the tune of two and three-quarter millions. The public Press for a long time urged that Ireland should be treated just as Wiltshire was treated. He could not imagine why Wiltshire was dragged in until he saw that an election was about to take place at Salisbury. He was quite ready that Ireland should be treated like Wiltshire, because in that case an Irish Agricultural Rates Bill would be brought in, and half the rates in Ireland would be paid from the Imperial Exchequer. Was England going to blow hot and cold, and was Ireland to have all lean and no fat? [*A laugh.*] Whenever anything told against them they were Ireland, and whenever it told for them they were Wiltshire. [*Laughter.*] If the Government brought in a Bill, under which half the rates of Ireland would be paid, they would do away with a good deal of agitation; they would stop his voice, at all events. [*A laugh.*] The noble Marquess spoke with moderation, but he did not urge anything very practical in answer to the demand of Ireland. They were to have another Commission. Commissions were generally the resource of weak Governments. A Commission, in which there was a galaxy of financial experts, sat for three years, and came to the conclusion that Ireland paid three millions more than she ought to pay. He admitted the difficulty in discriminating. He did not want, nor had he heard any sane Irishman suggest that there should be, a different duty on whisky in Ireland from that in England. If there were they would want a regular army of Custom House officers, and an Irishman like his noble and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor for Ireland, who crossed the Channel often, would have his portmanteau searched every morning. [*Laughter.*] He did not suggest that, because a man lived in Ireland, he should not pay income tax, but he did not see why his country should pay more than she was called upon to pay under the Act of Union. What had been the operation of English legislation in finance, particularly under the *régime* of Mr. Gladstone? When there was anything to pay the predominant partner made the poor partner pay up; but when there was any disputation of dividends England kept the lion's share.

EARL SPENCER: My Lords, I rise, with some reluctance, to make a few remarks at so late an hour, but I think it is right that somebody upon this Bench should say a few words before the Debate closes. It has been said that the Royal Commission was appointed for the purpose of assisting Home Rule. I do not think the noble Marquess actually said that, but he rather insinuated that the Commission had Home Rule in its mind when it made some of its recommendations. No doubt the Commission was appointed by a Government that had introduced, but unfortunately failed in carrying, a Home Rule Measure. The reason why the Commission became essential—and I lay great stress upon this—was, that the discussion both in 1886 and in 1893 on Home Rule had shown that there were such immense difficulties connected with Irish Finance that it was absolutely necessary the matter should be looked into. I venture to affirm that, whether Home Rule is to take a leading part again in politics or not, this subject is of essential importance to the United Kingdom. I do not wish to be misunderstood in saying this. Although I admit that at the present moment Home Rule is not the principal topic in politics, I do not for a moment acknowledge that it has lost its force amongst the potent and living elements of political subjects. [*Opposition cheers.*] I do not propose to discuss the question to-night on these lines, though I may be permitted to say that, in my opinion, it is more than probable that the only eventual solution of this subject may be found in a safe and well-considered Measure of Home Rule. [*Opposition cheers.*] The noble Lord who introduced the subject, and others, have said they do not attach very great importance to the arguments as to the separate treatment of Ireland, or, as Mr. Goschen called it, the separate entity of Ireland, or to the arguments with regard to the financial capacity of Ireland. I differ from them. I attach very great importance to the arguments with regard to the separate treatment of Ireland. I rather gathered from the speech of the noble Marquess that he, on the whole, admitted that Ireland must be treated in a separate way—I mean that exemptions must be made in the case of Ireland. The main argument with regard to this separate treatment of Ireland financially rests on the Act of Union. ["Hear, hear!"] If it did not rest on the Act of Union I should say there is no difference between Ireland and that poor county of Wilts to which the noble and learned Lord referred. I attach enormous importance to that Article in the Act of Union which points out the manner in which Ireland is to be treated, when necessary, with regard to exemptions and abatements; and I will go further than that, and say that the whole treatment of Ireland down to the present day proves that that Article has been maintained. I find that from 1817 to 1821 inclusive the average taxation in England, for which no similar taxation was raised in Ireland, was over £20,000,000. In 1845 it was £14,453,619, in 1863-64 it was nearly £4,000,000, and in 1893-94 it was over £4,000,000. I therefore say that the separate treatment of Ireland has been maintained to the present day. The taxation in England which is not applied to Ireland has, no doubt, greatly diminished, but at this moment that Article of the Act of Union is put into force. Before the Bill of 1893 was introduced, and before the Royal Commission was appointed, Her Majesty's Government, through the present First Lord of the Admiralty, then the Chancellor of the Exchequer, admitted the separate entity of Ireland in the terms of reference to a Committee he proposed in the House of Commons. I quite admit that that Committee never sat, but that does not alter the force of the argument that at that time Her

Majesty's Government admitted the separate entity of Ireland. I, therefore, say that all these various arguments make it impossible to treat Ireland as a group of counties. ["Hear, hear!"] With regard to this point, 11 out of the 12 Commissioners are in favour of the view which I now take. While speaking of the Commission, I think the noble Marquess rather unnecessarily criticised their able reports, and he minimised the consent which the large body of them gave. No doubt there were memoranda and a considerable number of points on which 11 out of the 12 Commissioners to a great extent agreed of extraordinary importance. As to the taxable capacity of Ireland, I shall not attempt to go through the various tests with regard to that. They are very numerous, and an argument might be founded at great length on every one of them; but it is singular that they nearly all converge on the same point—that the taxable capacity of Ireland is about 1-20th that of Great Britain. I shall just say a few words with regard to the actual poverty of Ireland. I think a very few figures will show this in a forcible way. I think it necessary to bring this forward in order to prove the necessity of dealing liberally with Ireland and of seeing that justice is done to her. At the beginning of the century, in taxation Great Britain paid £4 13s. 4d. per head. Now she pays £2 0s. 10d. per head. No doubt that is brought about by the increase of population and the increased wealth. Ireland at that time paid 14s. 6d. per head, and now she pays 28s. 10d. In 1819 consumers in Great Britain paid £2 8s. 7d.; now they pay £1 4s. 1d. The taxes on property were £1 1s. 8d.; now they are £1 0s. 9d. Whereas in Ireland the consumer in 1819 paid 11s.; now he pays 22s. per head. Therefore, in the case of England, taxation has greatly diminished, whereas in Ireland, as far as the capitation comparison goes, it has absolutely doubled. I think there are reasons why this question should be very carefully considered. ["Hear, hear!"] No doubt Ireland now pays 2¼ millions to 2½ millions more than her relative financial capacity allows. That is amply shown by the Reports of the Commission, and in other ways. With regard to her contribution to Imperial purposes, I cannot agree with those who say that Ireland ought not to contribute anything. She ought only to pay what is fair; but I maintain that Ireland is, in her degree, as much interested in the safety of our dominions at home or abroad as Great Britain. [*Cheers.*] She has a direct interest in maintaining the efficiency of the Army and the Navy. Take diplomacy. Surely the Irish, as we have seen during the past week, take a deep interest in foreign affairs. Should they not contribute their fair share towards this? I make these remarks because I have seen it more than once said by a certain advocate of Ireland that she should pay nothing to Imperial expenses. I do not agree with that. ["Hear, hear!"] I believe Ireland would be willing to pay a fair contribution towards Imperial expenses. We have heard a great deal as to expenditure in Ireland as a set-off to taxation. This is a large subject, and at this hour I could not attempt to go into it at any length. I admit, however, that the matter must be considered and carefully weighed. ["Hear, hear!"] But how is it to be done? The Government have proposed a Commission. I doubt extremely, I doubted it very much before I came into the House, and after hearing the speech of Lord Farrer I doubt still more, that a Commission is necessary or desirable on this subject. The information given by the Commission is very full and ample. I should have thought that the Government themselves would have been able to deal with it—that, with its whole brigade of financial experts at hand, it would have been able to come to a wise decision upon it without having an extremely long and irksome inquiry before a Commission. I do not want, my Lords, to say anything more now, but I venture to say that, in a few words, I have shown that there is a strong case for treating Ireland as a separate entity; that her condition requires that this should be taken into view; and that, if Her Majesty's Government are not compelled to deal with this speedily, Ireland will have strong reason for considering that she is treated with injustice—nay, even with bad faith. [*Cheers.*]

*VISCOUNT CLIFDEN said they were all agreed that if Ireland were or had been overtaxed they should be repaid and remitted. He was much surprised to hear his noble Friend make so much of prosperity and non-prosperity, and contend that increased population and prosperity went hand-in-hand. He knew very well that Ireland suffered most when she had a redundant population. Until the population was decreased Ireland was going down hill, and it was in 1853 that Ireland began to make rapid strides towards prosperity. He would say this, though he did not expect his countrymen to agree with him, that even if they were more taxed than they had a right to be (he did not wish it) it would pay them if that was the only means by which they were made part of the United Kingdom. With regard to the Royal Commission, he suggested whether they could not employ men free of all political bias—auditors, bankers, and solicitors, who would go into the matter and let them have a Report in a short time.

Motion agreed to.

RETIREMENT OF VESTRYMEN AND AUDITORS (LONDON) BILL [H.L.].

Committee (which stands appointed for this day) put off to Thursday next.

House adjourned at a Quarter before Eight o'clock, to Monday next, a Quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 5th March 1897.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

DUNDEE CORPORATION BILL.

CAPTAIN SINCLAIR (Forfar) had given notice of the following motion :—

> "That it be an Instruction to the Committee to leave out clauses 15, 16, and 17.'

He said that before the Order was taken he would like to ask a question on the subject. The county of Forfar and burgh of Broughty Ferry strongly objected to some clauses that were contained in this Measure. They objected to the powers which it was proposed to confer by certain clauses of the Bill, especially clauses 15, 16, and 17. He understood that the Scotch Office was prepared to undertake to oppose those clauses in Committee, and also to send a representative to the Committee for that purpose. If an assurance to that effect could be given now, he would not move the Motion that stood in his name.

MR. H. H. ASQUITH (Fife, E.) said he might state on behalf of the county of Fife, which entertained an equally strong objection to the clauses to which his hon. Friend had referred, that they also should be very glad if the Lord Advocate could give them some assurance that would dispense with the necessity of moving this Instruction, and would insure that, when the case came before the Committee, the Scotch Office would look after the various interests concerned.

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire) said that the matter had been under the consideration of the Scotch Office, and they were aware that those clauses were objected to, not only by the counties represented by the hon. Members, but also by other counties, and the Scotch Office had determined to oppose the clauses in Committee because they went beyond the general law. Therefore he was quite willing to give the undertaking that they would oppose the clauses in Committee, and they would send a representative there.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee) said that, as representing the promoters of the Bill, perhaps he might be allowed to say that he hoped the Lord Advocate would give them an equal assurance that he would not only oppose the clauses in the interests of the counties, but that he would have a fair regard to the interests of the towns concerned as well, and also that the action that he proposed to take in Committee was distinctly connected with the proposals made by the Government themselves in the Public Health Bill. When those clauses came up for discussion in the House, he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would be open to the arguments that would be placed before him, and that he would grant a modification of the clauses in the direction they proposed in the Bill under discussion.

*MR. HENRY ANSTRUTHER (St. Andrew's Burghs) said, as there was no Motion before the House, it would be irregular to continue the discussion, but, with reference to what the hon. and learned Gentleman had just said, whatever might be the view of the Government on the matter, he apprehended it would be quite open to those who represented the County Council of Fife to take any steps they might think fit to oppose these clauses before the Committee.

*THE LORD ADVOCATE said certainly the chief reason why the Government objected to the clauses was that they seemed to go further than the clauses in the Public Health Bill of this year, which, as hon. Members would remember, really represented a well-considered clause, which was inserted in the House of Lords, when the two sides were represented and the matter fully argued.

CAPTAIN SINCLAIR said he did not move his Motion.

QUESTIONS.

CYCLE POSTS (RURAL DISTRICTS).

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he is in a position to state what steps have been taken since the last Session of Parliament to provide bicycles for the use of letter carriers and telegraph messengers in the United Kingdom, and especially in the country and suburban districts; what price has been paid; and to whom and in what circumstances or cases will an officer of the Department be supplied with a bicycle, and upon what terms as to the care or safe custody of the machine?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. R. W. HANBURY, Preston): For many years it has been the practice to establish cycle posts in rural districts where the conditions are suitable, but no special advance in this direction has been made since the last Session of Parliament. It must be recollected that only those rural posts are adapted for cycles where the roads are tolerably flat and in good order, and where the postman has not to cross fields and follow bye-roads. In those cases, where cycles are used by postmen in the service of the Department, the Department does not itself provide the cycles, but grants an allowance of four shillings a week in each case, the postman making his own arrangements as to purchase and maintenance. As regards telegraph messengers, arrangements have been made since last Session to supply bicycles—which will remain the property of the Department—to 22 provincial towns as an experiment. At the same time weekly allowances will be given to telegraph messengers in a corresponding number of provincial towns to use bicycles, of which they themselves will become the possessors and for the care of which they will be responsible. The result of this concurrent trial of the two systems will enable the Department to decide which will be preferable as a permanent arrangement. In the suburban districts of London some bicycles, the property of the Department, are about to be used experimentally with the same object. It would not be expedient to state the price paid for the bicycles. The Postmaster General has enjoined upon postmasters and sub-postmasters generally the desirability of arranging for the employment of persons mounted on cycles in the delivery of telegrams wherever it is practicable, especially for distances exceeding three miles. For such distances the charge for delivery by cycle will be at the rate of 4d. per mile, as compared with the charge of 1s. per mile by man and horse.

MERCANTILE MARINE FUND.

SIR GEORGE BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the Departmental Committee on the Mercantile Marine Fund has reported that the receipts from light dues exceed the expenditure for lighting our coasts by an average sum for the last 12 years exceeding £56,000; and, whether the whole question of the provision for the lighting of our coasts can now be referred to a Select Committee of this House, so that a final and complete settlement can be arrived at on this vexed question?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. RITCHIE, Croydon): Yes, Sir; but my hon. Friend is aware that the Legislature has placed upon the Mercantile Marine Fund charges other than those directly connected with lighting. Having regard to the recent investigation of the question by the Departmental Committee, I see no reason for asking the House to appoint a Select Committee to further inquire into the matter.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL: May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman is aware that the Departmental Committee distinctly reported that they refrained from dealing with the whole question of light dues because it was outside the terms of their reference?

MR. RITCHIE: I do not think they quite said that. What they said was that the question whether the cost of lighting the coast should be contributed by the Treasury and the shipowners entirely relieved of it, did not come within their province. I am not prepared to recommend that a Committee should be appointed to inquire into the matter.

INCOME TAX (BRITISH COLONIES).

SIR GEORGE BADEN-POWELL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether in continuation of the request made in the last Session, a Return could now be presented to Parliament giving details as to the levying of Income Tax in British Colonies, including name of Colony, statute authority, rate of tax, and whether levied by domicile of person or locality of property so taxed?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): A return containing details as to the levying of Income Tax in British Colonies was given privately to the hon. Member last Session. If it were now proposed to lay it on the Table I should have to refer to each of the Colonies for verification, and it could not possibly be laid this Session. Under the circumstances, unless there is some general demand for this information, I think it would hardly be worth while to take the steps necessary before presentation.

TELEPHONE SERVICE.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether his attention has been called to the inefficient service of the Telephone Company in London and Westminister, and of its inability to supply persons with telephones; and whether he will take immediate steps to place the telephone service of London, which is now almost essential to modern business requirements, on a satisfactory basis?

MR. HANBURY: The attention of the Postmaster General has not recently been called to any inefficiency in the telephone service in London and Westminster, and he has no knowledge of the inability of the Telephone Company to supply persons with telephones. He understands that the Company are making every effort to place the service on a satisfactory basis, and that the work of reconstructing the system on the metallic circuit principle is now nearly completed. The Company state that they hope to be able to make arrangements for largely putting the lines underground, and that they will then be enabled to effect still further improvements.

MR. BARTLEY gave notice that on the Post Office Estimates he should draw attention to the unsatisfactory condition of the telephone service.

GRANGEGORMAN PRISON.

MR. J. L. CAREW (Dublin, College Green): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he is aware that in February 1896, less than a month before the Order of the Board curtailing fuel issue in Grangegorman Prison, the superintendent of that prison fined a number of the female warders for having ashes under the grates in their room and required them to clear them away, although two servants are paid out of the public money to do this and other work; (2) whether in March 1896 the superintendent denied the issue of fuel to some officers and sanctioned the issue of fuel to other officers, who like the former class had access to the general sitting or mess room, and whether a remonstrance caused this inequality to be remedied; (3) and, whether, the officer designated superintendent being a female, it is in accordance with the law that she should determine complaints against the staff, which is composed of males and females?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds, Central): The facts are generally as stated in the first paragraph. The two servants were otherwise engaged on the occasion. The superintendent reports that she is not aware of any remonstrance having been made as alleged at the period referred to, or of any inequality in the treatment of the officers, but that in the exercise of her discretion, she sanctioned the issue of fuel to three assistant matrons whose quarters are situated at the rear of the prison and at a long distance from the mess room. I am not aware that the superintendent is legally incompetent to exercise the disciplinary authority delegated to her by the Board as regards prison officers serving under her orders.

SCIENCE AND ART DEPARTMENT (INQUIRIES).

*LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education how many Parliamentary and Departmental Committees have inquired into matters connected with the Museums and Art and Science Schools of the Science and Art Department since 1st March 1877.

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir JOHN GORST, Cambridge University): There have been one Parliamentary and forty-six Departmental Committees.

FAIR RENT APPLICATION (COUNTY MONAGHAN).

MR. JAMES DALY (Monaghan, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that in October last a number of tenants on the estate of R. C. Leslie, Ballybay, county Monaghan, made application to the Irish Land Commissioners to have fair rents fixed on their holdings; whether he can state the cause of the delay in having fair rents fixed, and whether the Snb-Commissioners who will try these cases will sit in Ballybay to suit the convenience of all concerned; whether he is aware that flax is largely grown in this district, and that this crop has been almost a total failure for some years past; and whether he will send sub-Commissioners to try these cases who know about flax growing?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: Some of the cases from the estate referred to were heard at Ballybay on the 12th and 13th ult. The Assistant Commissioners were Mr. Edge, Q.C., and Messrs Patterson and Mowbray. The decisions have not yet been communicated to the Land Commission. The remaining cases, 15 in number, will be listed in due course, and will be heard at such place, and by such Assistant Commissioners, as the Land Commission in the exercise of their discretion, and having regard to the circumstances, think proper. I must repeat that I have no control over the arrangements made or proposed by the Land Commission.

LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT 1896 (RULES).

MR. JOHN DILLON (Mayo, E.): I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether the rules provided for in Sub-section (2) of Section 25 of the Land Law (Ireland) Act 1896, have yet been made by the Treasury; and if they have been made, where they are to be seen?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. ATKINSON, Londonderry, N.): The Land Commission are still in communication with the Treasury on the subject of the Rules proposed to be issued under Section 25, Sub-section (2) of the Act of last year. As soon as a settlement is arrived at in the matter there will be no delay in issuing these Rules.

LAND COMMISSION (RULES).

MR. DILLON: I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether the new rules of the Land Commission have been yet laid upon the Table?

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND: Two sets of rules, dated respectively the 2nd of September, 1896, and the 21st of November, 1896, have been made provisionally by the Land Commission under the second section of the Rules Publication Act of 1893. These have not been laid upon the Table of the House, and it is more than doubtful whether it is necessary that they should be. One set of final rules, dated the 2nd of January 1897, which are little more than a consolidation of previously existing rules, have been made by the Land Commission. These final rules should have been laid on the Table of the House within three weeks from the commencement of the Session, but, owing to the unfortunate illness of the officer of the Land Commission whose duty it was to see to these matters, this in the present press of business was omitted to be done. As soon as my attention was called to the omission I took immediate steps to have it remedied, and accordingly all these rules have been laid upon the Table of the House.

LOAN FUND ACTS (IRELAND).

Mr. J. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he is aware that a few years ago an official of the Strabane (county Tyrone) Loan Fund, working under the Charitable Act, 6 and 7 Vict., c. 91, was convicted of embezzling the funds of the Society, and sentenced to a term of imprisonment; that more recently there have been defalcations in the funds of this Society; and that the Society, including depositors and debenture holders, have lost considerably through these defalcations; (2) whether the Government or the Loan Fund Board will recoup the Society for its losses; and (3) what steps it is proposed to take to prevent similar occurrences in future?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: I am informed that the facts are substantially as stated in the first part of the Question, except that the amount ascertained to have been recently misappropriated has been repaid to the Society by one of the sureties of the defaulting official. The Loan Fund Board have, so far as I am aware, no power to recoup any Loan Society for losses arising from dishonesty or from any other cause, and I have already stated that the Government cannot accept responsibility in the matter. As regards the third paragraph of the Question, it would be impossible to give a definite answer pending further consideration of the Report of the Committee of Inquiry. Where, however, Societies of this kind are locally managed, the local managers must primarily be held responsible. Even the most careful supervision of a Central Board could not effectively secure a Society from defalcations by its officials.

DELIVERY OF LETTERS.

Mr. GRANT LAWSON (York, N.R., Thirsk): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether there is any rule of the Post Office which enables a postmaster to direct that letters bearing any business or professional description shall not be delivered by the early deliveries before places of business are open at the private address of the person for whom they are obviously intended, even when such address is within the same postal delivery, but shall be detained until the next delivery after such places of business are opened; and whether, if such rule exists, he will take steps so to amend it as to prevent the grave inconvenience caused by it in places where there are few deliveries of letters?

Mr. HANBURY: There is no rule which precludes postmasters from delivering letters bearing a business or professional description at the private address of the person for whom they are obviously intended. If such letters, besides bearing a business description, are actually addressed to a place of business, it is the postmaster's duty to deliver them there in accordance with the general rule which requires that all letters should be delivered at the place of their address; but even in such cases arrangements can be made for a special delivery at the addressee's private residence on payment of an annual fee of one guinea.

ARMY EQUIPMENT.

Mr ARTHUR JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether a certain Horse Battery, R. H. A., in the First Army Corps, is still without the new light equipment, and has only four guns, and is without any ammunition wagons; whether the Field Artillery is now between 700 and 800 men short; and, how it is proposed to make good this deficiency?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): Every battery of Horse Artillery in the First Army Corps is fully equipped in every respect. The Field Artillery is necessarily under establishment (though not so largely as my hon. Friend suggests), having just dispatched its drafts to India to replace men coming home for discharge to reserve, etc. The deficiency will be met by recruiting as usual.

*SIR C. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): Will the right hon. Gentleman explain what he means by being fully equipped? Have they got the new guns?

*MR. BRODRICK: I think the whole of the First Army Corps have, but there are some batteries that have not been delivered by the trade. Those are the only ones which have not got the new guns.

MR. JEFFREYS said the right hon. Gentleman had not answered the first part of the Question as to the ammunition wagons.

*MR. BRODRICK: I said that the whole of the First Army Corps is fully equipped.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.), asked if there were only four guns to a battery?

*MR. BRODRICK: No, Sir; the First Army Corps batteries have six guns.

*SIR C. DILKE: If the right hon. Gentleman finds out he is mistaken in that statement will he correct it?

*MR. BRODRICK: Certainly.

STEAMSHIP "ANGLOMAN" (FOG SIGNALS).

SIR ARTHUR FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade (1) if his attention has been called to the finding of the Court of Inquiry into the loss during a fog of the *Angloman* steamer on the Skerries, exonerating the master and officers from all blame for the loss on the ground that the fog signal that ought to have been sounded was not heard by them, although the person in charge declared he had given the usual signals; and (2) will he cause an inquiry to be made into the arrangements for using the fog signal, and its sufficiency in protecting vessels from approaching a dangerous point, round which the vessels bound for the Mersey must pass?

MR. RITCHIE: I have not seen the report of the Court of Inquiry, which I am told is in the printer's hands; but the Board of Trade are in communication with the Trinity House and the Northern Lights Commissioners with regard to the matter raised in the second paragraph of the hon. Member's Question.

TUBULAR BOILERS (H.M.S. "POWERFUL").

SIR ARTHUR FORWOOD: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty what was the total consumption of coal during the thirty hours' trial of the *Powerful*, how many boilers were used, and what was the average indicated horse-power and speed maintained during the trial; and what number of vessels, other than torpedo boats and destroyers, have been fitted or are being fitted with tubular water boilers, with the aggregate indicated power of their engines, and if any and which of them have yet been tried on an oversea voyage, and to what place?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. G. J. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): The number of boilers in use on the thirty hours' trial of the *Powerful* was 48, the whole number, the total coal consumption 453 17-20 tons, the average indicated horse-power 18,459, and the average speed 20·95 knots per hour. There are 39 vessels in the Navy, other than torpedo boats, destroyers, and small craft, fitted or being fitted with water-tube boilers. The aggregate horse-power of these vessels is 421,800. Of these, the *Speedy* and *Sharpshooter* have been employed on service with the Channel Squadron, the *Speedy* since February 20, 1894, and the *Sharpshooter* from September 15, 1894, to May 6, 1895. I may mention that the French man-of-war *Alger* recently returned from China after a three years' commission, and we have been informed that there were no defects in her boilers, which were of the Belleville type, and that they worked satisfactorily during the whole commission.

FREEMASONS (IRELAND).

MR. MICHAEL AUSTIN (Limerick, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if a register is kept of the members of the

Masonic Society in Ireland, in compliance with the Act of Parliament, 39 George III., c. 79; and if said list for the different counties is sent annually to the Clerk of the Peace for each county; if so, is it open for inspection?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: No register is kept of the members of the Masonic Society in Ireland, though the Act of Parliament referred to has not been repealed. It has fallen into disuse and become obsolete, like the Catholic Emancipation Act, which prohibits the assumption by Roman Catholic clergymen in Ireland of ecclesiastical titles, and constitutes as a misdemeanour the coming into the realm of members of religious and monastic orders in Ireland.

DISTRESS (CLAREMORRIS, CO. MAYO).

MR. M. DAVITT (Mayo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received a memorial and resolution from the Board of Guardians of the Claremorris, County Mayo, Poor Law Union, drawing his attention to the need of aid from the Congested Districts Board within the scheduled portions of that Union; and whether he can see his way to recommend to the Congested Districts Board a compliance with the request of the Guardians of the said Union?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The resolution referred to has been received and forwarded to the Congested Districts Board, by whom it will be considered at their next meeting.

IRISH MAILS.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster-General, whether he has recently received a copy of resolution adopted by the Cavan Board of Guardians recommending the dispatch from Dublin, immediately on its arrival there, of the Irish night provincial letters, thereby securing delivery in London at about 5 p.m., and enabling business letters to be replied to inside 24 hours; and whether this arrangement could possibly be made in connection with the new time table for Irish mails; and, if not possible of adoption at present, can the Postmaster General promise consideration with a view to future adoption?

MR. HANBURY: The Postmaster General has received a copy of the Resolution referred to by the hon. Member. As I stated in the House on the 15th and on the 22nd of February, the Postmaster General has been much pressed by Irish representatives to fix a later instead of an earlier hour for the departure from Dublin of the morning mail to England, and he has so far yielded to their wishes as to fix the hour of departure from Dublin at 7.10 a.m., instead of at 6.40 a.m. The arrangement desired by the hon. Member cannot be made in connection with the new time table which comes into effect on the 1st proximo, nor can the Postmaster General, having regard to the strong pressure brought upon him to postpone the departure of the mail, hold out any expectation of its future adoption. The night mails arrive in Dublin, if punctual, at a little before and after 5 a.m.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he can state the result of his inquiries into the very inadequate limited mail day service between Dundalk and Cavan and Dundalk and Belturbet; and, whether the Department has yet entered into negotiations with the Great Northern Railway Company to start a special train from Dundalk on the arrival there of the morning mail at 7.20 a.m.; and, if not, can he give any assurance that pressure will be brought to bear on the Company to grant this concession?

MR. HANBURY: The Postmaster General cannot at present state the result of the inquiries into the matter referred to by the hon. Member, as the inquiries are not concluded, and in these circumstances he is not yet in a position to approach the Railway Company on the subject of the day mail to Cavan and Belturbet. The Postmaster General, however, will place before the Great Northern Railway Company the strong desire that exists for improvement in the hope that some arrangement may be found practicable.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS (SCOTLAND).

MR. J. W. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether it is the case that the Scotch

Education Department has resolved to employ in the elementary schools teachers holding certificates issued by the Irish Education Board; and whether such teachers are equal in their qualifications to those holding certificates from the Scotch Education Department?

*The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. Graham Murray, Buteshire): No change has been made in the Scottish Education Code in regard to certificates issued by the Irish Education Board, which are not recognised under that Code as qualifying a teacher to earn grants.

EDUCATIONAL ENDOWMENTS (IRELAND) ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Mr. WILLIAM JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in regard to the Educational Endowments (Ireland) Act Amendment Bill, the Government have given it further consideration; and, if so, whether he can now state what course they propose to take regarding it?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: Yes, Sir. The question of amending this Bill has been most carefully considered; and we have arrived at the conclusion that without alterations so extensive as to amount to an entire reconstruction of the Bill, it would be impossible to amend it so as to carry out the views of the Government. Under the circumstances the Government will feel bound to oppose the further progress of the Bill.

DARDANELLES.

Mr. BRYN ROBERTS (Carnarvonshire, Eifion): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to a passage in a speech delivered on the 22nd ultimo by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, in which he is reported to have said that M. Millerand thinks that France should have entered the Dardanelles and seized the Sultan in his Palace; that a proposal was made by one Power at the end of November 1895, but was set aside; whether that proposal, or a proposal to enter forcibly the Dardanelles, became known to Her Majesty's Government; and, if so, when; and whether Her Majesty's Government expressed any, and what, opinion upon it?

*Mr. CURZON: I have nothing to add to the answers which I have on two previous occasions given to the hon. Member on the same subject.

Mr. JAMES BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) said those previous answers were susceptible of two or three interpretations, and they would like to know which they were to accept. Did the right hon. Gentleman mean that no such proposal came to the knowledge of the Government, or did he mean that he did not desire or refused to make any statement on the subject?

*Mr. CURZON: I do not think I ought to be called upon suddenly to explain—[*Ministerial cheers*]—the two previous answers of mine, the meaning of which was absolutely clear. I have said that I can add nothing to those answers, and to that, I am afraid, I must adhere. ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. BRYCE: Then we shall be obliged to put another question to clear up the matter. [*Ministerial cries of* "Order!"]

Mr. BRYN ROBERTS said the first part of his question had not been answered at all. Did the right hon. Gentlemen evade it or decline to answer it. [*Ministerial cries of* "Order!"] If he refused to answer it, let him give reasons why he refused. [*Opposition cheers.*]

*Mr. SPEAKER: The right hon. Gentleman has said he does not propose to give any further answer. He is at liberty to refuse to give a further answer if he chooses to do so.

Mr. BRYN ROBERTS said he had not given any answer. As a matter of privilege——

*Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member seems to be under the impression that he can compel an answer. He has no right to compel any further answer if the right hon. Gentleman does not propose to give it.

ROYAL MARINE ARTILLERY.

Sir JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty (1) what is the number of subalterns of Royal Marine Artillery now serving afloat; (2) what additional number of subalterns would be required for service afloat in the event of the mobilisation of the Fleet; and (3) whether there are only two fully trained subalterns now available for service afloat at the Royal Marine Artillery Headquarters, Eastney, one of whom is already under orders to embark?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: Twelve subalterns, R.M.A., are now serving afloat. The number of subalterns, R.M.A., required for service afloat, in the event of mobilisation, cannot be given, as it would depend upon the ships to be mobilised, which have different complements. The answer to the third Question is in the affirmative. There are 17 officers undergoing instruction in addition.

SIR JOHN COLOMB: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty what percentage of the number of gunners of Royal Marine Artillery who embarked in the Fleet for the first time during 1896, had passed all artillery drills according to regulations; and what percentage of gunners who re-embarked during 1896 had only not requalified in all artillery drills according to regulation, but were actually re-embarked without requalifying, according to regulation, in Naval gunnery?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: Seventeen per cent. of the gunners R.M.A. who embarked in the Fleet for the first time during 1896 had passed all artillery drills; but none were embarked who had not passed in Naval gunnery. There are no regulations regulations requiring gunners to requalify before re-embarking.

SUPPLY (COLONIAL VOTE).

MR. ERNEST FLOWER (Bradford, W.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he will be able to take the Colonial Vote at an early day?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I do not think it would be possible to make any announcement as to the Special Service Vote until we have made some progress with the financial business, which must be got through before March 31. We have still to get the Speaker out of the Chair on the Navy Votes. Then there are the Supplementary Army Votes, the Vote on account, and we must get the Speaker out of the Chair before I can allocate Friday for any discussion.

MR. HERBERT LEWIS (Flint Boroughs): Will the right hon. Gentleman make arrangements to bring forward at a comparatively early date in the Session the Votes which were closured at the end of last Session?

MR. DILLON asked whether the Civil Service Estimates would be taken next Friday.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASNRY: I think it will be possible to get the Speaker out of the Chair on the Civil Service Estimates on the first Friday after we have disposed of the necessary Navy Estimates; but, of course, I cannot tell the hon. Gentleman how soon that will be. It will depend on the action of the House, over which I have no control. I believe I have already stated that I would endeavour to bring the Votes closured last Session on at an early date.

CRETE.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it would be possible to at once lay before Parliament the Greek Note of 10th February, recently alluded to by him in the House, together with any subsequent statement of the case of the Greek Government which may be in the possession of Her Majesty's Government?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. G. CURZON, Lancashire, Southport): The Greek Notes will no doubt be laid in due course, together with the other papers relating to the same subject. There is the less necessity at once to lay the Note of February 11th, inasmuch as it would appear to have been already communicated by the Greek Government to the Press.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Monmouthshire, W.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury a Question of which I have given him private notice—namely, whether he will state the terms of the demand made on the Sultan by the Government in concert with the Powers, and particularly the conditions imposed in regard to the removal of Turkish troops from Crete, and whether, as in the case of Greece, a fixed date has been assigned for the compulsory assent by the Porte to the conditions imposed?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: As the right hon. Gentleman is aware, I am not in a position to answer the Question in consequence of not having received from our Ambassador at Constantinople authentic intelligence as to what has been done in the matter of the presentation of the Note to the Porte. I shall, of course, tell the House at the earliest opportunity what has occurred, and at once lay on the Table the Note to the Porte as well as the Note presented to the Greek Government.

SIR W. HARCOURT: As the position is very critical and the House will not meet again until Monday, can my right hon. Friend say whether, on the Adjournment of the House to-night, he would give further information as to the demands made upon Turkey as well as the demands made on Greece?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I think it is extremely probable I shall have information before the close of business, and if so I will communicate it to the House.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall) wished to inquire as to the fate of the Mussulmans at Candano, whether the attention of the Under Secretary had been called to the statement of the correspondent of *Standard*

> "at Canea yesterday to the effect that a great deal of most precious time which may cost many lives is being wasted—in fact, the fate of the wretched Mussulmans appears to be secondary to the question which side should have the political credit of rescuing them. The claims of humanity are, in fact, those of diplomacy."

A similar telegram appeared in the *Daily News* from another source. He wished to ask whether, in view of these facts and the danger these 3,000 persons, mostly women and children, were in at the present moment, the Government would telegraph to their Admiral in Cretan waters and instruct him and his colleagues to dispatch the land force stated by the Consuls of Great Britain, Russia and Italy on February 22 to be necessary for the relief of these persons?

MR. DILLON asked if there was any truth in the statement made in several of that morning's papers that the Admirals opposed considerable delay to the Greek Consul, and refused to convey, or allow the Greek Consul to proceed to Candano in accordance with the orders of King George to render assistance in rescuing the Moslems?

*MR. CURZON: No, Sir; the statement is absolutely incorrect. I have not seen the telegram in the papers, but I do not hesitate to say that it did not give a correct statement of the facts. The information we have received on the subjects of the beleaguered garrisons at Candano and Selino is as follows: On March 2nd, the *Dryad* left to escort a Turkish steamer conveying provisions to the inhabitants of Selino. The Admirals on March 4, so far from refusing to help the Greek Vice-Consul, offered to convey him to Selino in a vessel of the Allied Fleet, with a view to assist the rescue of the Mussulmans at Candano. We have no information whether he refused or accepted. Special instructions to spare no exertions for this end have been sent to the British Admiral; and in addition to three foreign ships, Her Majesty's ship *Rodney*, with Sir A. Biliotti on board, has started for Selino with orders to relieve Candano.

MR. DILLON: I only wished to give the right hon. Gentleman an opportunity of stating whether or not it was true that the Admirals refused to permit the Consul to proceed on the Greek ship, and in consequence of the refusal several hours was lost.

*MR. CURZON: My information does not bear that out.

MESSAGE TO THE KING OF GREECE.

MR. HUBERT DUNCOMBE (Cumberland, Egremont): I desire to ask the First Lord of the Treasury a question of which I have given him private notice—namely, whether his attention has been called to the publication of a telegraphed letter alleged to have been signed by several hon. Members of this House—[*Opposition cheers*]—conveying an expression of their opinion to the ruler of a Power with whom the continuation of our friendly relations is of the first importance? [*Ministerial cheers.*]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: In answer to my hon. Friend I have to say that my attention has been called to the letter to which he refers. Without expressing any opinion upon the action of the gentlemen who signed the letter, I may say I do not anticipate any serious consequences from it. [*Loud Ministerial cheers*] It was signed by less than one-sixth of the Members of the House immediately after a Debate had occurred on the foreign policy of the Government, and on which no division was challenged. [*Renewed Ministerial cheers.*]

MR. R. PIERPOINT (Warrington): Mr. Speaker, I desire very respectfully to ask you whether it is consonant with the spirit of the conditions under which strangers are admitted to the Members' Lobby of this House that a representative of a journal should use this privilege for the purpose of securing the signatures of Members to a document bearing upon a political question? [*Ministerial cheers.*]

*MR. SPEAKER: It is obvious that the question of the hon. Member has reference to the same matter which was the subject of the last Question. I must not be taken as expressing any opinion about the facts of that case, for I do not know what the facts are; but in answer to the general question I may say that I certainly consider that it would be an abuse of the privilege — [*Ministerial cheers*]—granted to any gentleman representing the Press in the Lobby if he were to use that opportunity for the purpose of soliciting from Members signatures to public petitions or addresses of any kind. [*Ministerial cheers.*] Unless I am otherwise instructed by the House, I should deem it my duty to prevent anything of the sort taking place if it were brought to my notice. [*Cheers.*]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY.

STRENGTH OF THE NAVY.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) called attention to relative strength in ships and men. He said it was not his intention to make any attack on the Admiralty. He should move no Amendment and should leave the field open to the hon. Member for Great Yarmouth, with whom he agreed. The policy of the Admiralty was the policy of their predecessors, and there was constant improvement in administration. This was well, inasmuch as they were now told that wars would be won in the future by administration in time of peace. He was not, however, himself satisfied that the policy proceeded on a satisfactory basis as regarded the completeness of the defence afforded. The Leader of the House, in the previous year, had said that we should in 1898-99 possess a "considerable superiority over" the fleets of the two next Powers—that was France and Russia. He was himself still doubtful if that was so; and if in fact it were, he did not consider that that superiority was sufficient for this country. The first question was, had we this considerable superiority? It was not his intention to discuss cruisers, because, although he was told by some authorities that we were somewhat short of those we needed, yet he was not competent to answer the question how far destroyers might, for some duties, take the place of cruisers. He should discuss the matter as far as the battleships were concerned, and should not enter upon a close and detailed comparison. In 1893 he himself had joined the Conservative party in complaining of the shipbuilding programme of the then Liberal Administration, but he wished to compare the Return issued by the Admiralty in December 1893, with that issued by the Admiralty in August 1896. These two Returns each gave a list of all the battleships built and building. If they looked at the battleships built between the dates of the two Returns, upon the showing of the Admiralty themselves the British battleships built between those dates were seven, and the French and Russian were 11. The British battleships were all first class; the French and Russian battleships were six first class and five second class; but there was evidently an increase in the strength of France and Russia as compared with our own strength, and this he might take as proved by the Admiralty figures, although those now responsible had thought the state of things unsatisfactory in 1893.

Moreover, the First Lord of the Admiralty had properly pointed out to the House last year that a British battleship of 14,000 or 15,000 tons must be compared with a French battleship of only 11,000 tons, because of the necessity which lay upon our ships, owing to the immense distances of sea they had to traverse—a necessity which did not exist in the case of the French ships—of carrying an enormous quantity of coal on board. It was said, however, that we were launching and completing ships very fast. ["Hear, hear!"] He doubted if, proportionally, we were keeping this advantage. ["Hear, hear!"] At any rate, Russia was also launching and completing ships extraordinarily fast as compared with her former achievements in that respect. ["Hear, hear!"] Besides, to be able to build faster than other Powers would be very little advantage in time of war. The advantage then lay with the Power which had its ships ready, for in a naval war the issue was likely to be decided early. But he believed it was ceasing to be true that we built ships faster than other Powers. There was a time when we were able to build faster than other Powers; but the other Powers were now catching us up in that respect. ["Hear, hear!"] We used to pride ourselves on the fact that we built extraordinarily fast, and that the French built extraordinarily slow. That statement had been made with patriotic laudation on many occasions in the House. But the French were beginning to build extraordinarily fast in certain classes of battleships—["hear, hear!"]—though they were still slow in regard to others. It was, however, on the Government Return that he laid the greatest stress. He declared that, however satisfactory the House might deem the figures of that Return as regarded the future, the test of the past was the only test they could apply to it, and applying that test to it showed that, instead of going forward, as the House might believe from the statements of the Government, we were going backwards and falling into arrear in regard to the supply of ships. It should also be remembered that, as compared with other Powers, we had a larger number of ineffective ships, such as ships armed with muzzle-loaders. Again, the state of things in the Mediterranean was such as to cause us some anxiety. While our Fleet in the Mediterranean had been decreased, there had been an enormous increase in the Russian strength in those waters. As compared with France and Russia, we did not now stand in such a favourable position in the Mediterranean as we stood some time ago. Allusion was often made to our ally. The First Lord of the Admiralty had stated last year that we should not stand alone if we were attacked in those waters; but the Power referred to was, relatively speaking, notoriously falling into the background in the matter of ships. The Estimates and statement published on Tuesday night had been described as having upon them the thumb-mark of the Treasury. A few weeks ago it had been thought that five battleships were to have been commenced in the year; although three of them late in the year. It was now seen that only four were to be commenced—three of them at the extreme end of the financial year. The First Lord might say that they could not be commenced sooner because they were to be built in slips which were at present full. It was possible that our means of construction in our dockyards had not sufficiently grown to meet requirements; but the First Lord would not deny that if the ships were ordered they could be obtained by contract, or that an additional number might be so obtained, even if in the dockyards there was a pinch. But the Estimates showed a decrease of 1,500 dockyard hands, as compared with the Estimates of the previous year. He could not regard this programme as satisfactory. Of the great naval Powers, the causes of possible conflict with France were recognised, and those of conflict with Germany with regard to Africa. He himself felt that what had occurred in Northern China in joint pressure by the three Powers—Russia, Germany, and France—in the acceptance of the Russian loan as against our proffered loan, and in the dominance of Russia in Manchuria and Korea, recently secured by treaty, pointed to great risk of common action against ourselves by three great maritime Powers, and it seemed improbable that we could ourselves break up that Concert except by giving way upon points which were vital to our interests, such as our China trade. We had been told on the Naval Estimates last year, what was in fact obvious, that we were isolated, and he himself was all for isolation, as against a policy of alliances; for nothing could be weaker as a policy than one of sham alliances where there was no common purpose; but it must never be forgotten for a moment that isolation meant a predominant fleet. The risks were increasing. The generation who had fought in Continental war, of one of our rivals against another, were being edged out of their power over ideas by those who were too young in 1870 to remember it; and the ideas of the newer generation on both sides were colonial and anti-British. The three great maritime Powers of the Northern Continent were, as their recent actions showed, able now to agree on a policy of Continental peace—joint support of the policy of Russia of expansion on the Pacific, of France in the Further East, and of Germany in Africa. This conjunction could only be faced by us being strong enough at sea to hold our own. These Powers had enormous armies to maintain. We were able easily to outbuild them as regarded ships, and it was to our interest to do so. On the Naval Estimates in 1896, and again, at the end of the Session, the First Lord of the Admiralty had contended that we should for certain have allies; and he used the words "We shall not stand alone." Of this there was no possible security. In reply to the observation that a combination of the three Powers was reasonably possible, while that of all Powers was not, the First Lord had said that only the Athenian answer could be made—that "we must trust in Providence and a good admiral." The same reply might, of course, be made as against a single Power. Putting aside, however, all disturbing causes, such as the use of inventions in one navy which another did not possess, all our admirals advised us that superiority at sea followed well-known rules, and that we could make ourselves safe with a certain superiority of force, well within our reach, against all probable enemies. In spite of the undue cost of our land forces, we could provide that security with less strain upon our wealth than the strain which the maintenance of gigantic armies and navies at the same time produced on the finances of Powers like France and Italy, and he confessed he thought that to provide for it was sound policy, and wiser than to run risks. He had recently shown by a detailed consideration of the figures that the military and naval expenditure of the Empire had reached the gigantic figure of 63 millions sterling, of which 61 millions sterling a year was now spent out of British or Indian funds—that was funds for which the House of Commons was directly or indirectly responsible. Of this tremendous figure the British Army cost far more than half, and the British Navy far less than half. The Navy cost far less than half, even if we took from the Army Votes and added to the Navy Votes the whole of the cost for maintenance of the sea fortresses and coaling stations which were the bases of the Navy. When he was asked whether so vast an expenditure was not sufficient, and how much he would spend, he replied, whatever was necessary for existence; but if economies must needs be made they would be more tolerable in the case of military and fixed defence than in the case of that mobile fleet which was our main reliance. Peace was happily certain for the present, but in the long run would only be preserved if our naval strength was such as to cause a combination of three Powers, which could be formed for certain purposes, to pause before attacking us. He confessed he thought it criminal not to insure against the risk while we had time to do so, and that insurance meant certain peace. As Captain Mahan had put it, the British Navy was the best security for peace. There were no doubt certain chances in our favour; that we were one Power contending, in the hypothesis, at sea, against allies, that our seamanship was better than that of the Russians, both as regarded officers and men; and in some degree better than that of the French as regarded men, on account of our long service, although, in the case of France, there were other, closely connected, facts which told the other way. France had more lieutenants than we had, and lieutenants took nine years to make, and our long service, as compared with their shorter service and real reserve, gave us a limited and them a virtually unlimited command of men in war. Our superiority in rapidity of building was disappearing, as had been seen. French and German mobilisation was more rapid than our own. The French possessed a perfect geographical position on the two seas. Our coaling-station system required a telegraphic cable communication in our own hands, which we had not got, and we were specially short as compared with other Powers in trained engineers and trained stokers. The Appropriation accounts for Navy-services just issued contained a painful correspondence as to the necessity for a large expenditure on confinement cells at the naval depôts, caused by the extraordinary proportion of bad characters among suddenly enlisted stokers. The only one of these considerations upon which he should dwell was that of manning. It had been admitted by the First Lord that as matters stood we must draw over 10,000 men from the Reserve on the outbreak of war. Every man in the ship's complement was now utilised; and they were somewhat short complements even when we used, for manning the ship, all the red Marines and all the blue Marines at sea. There were others who calculated that, even with the large increase of men for which they had to thank the First Lord, they would really need from the Reserve an even larger number than had been named. This Reserve was not trained like the reserves of continental nations. The men had little knowledge of guns or of naval discipline. The ships in the Mediterranean and in the Channel Squadron and on foreign stations would have to begin the war with their present crews, and the ships to be fitted out from home would have so unduly great a proportion of imperfectly trained men that they could not be held to be efficient the beginning of a war. The latest official statement about the Reserve was to the following effect:

> "The number of 'officers under drill fell short of the estimate'; 'the full number of men estimated to be under six months' training not embarked during the year; the Reserve men not having taken to the proposed embarkation on district ships; fewer first-class men or firemen volunteered for manœuvres'; 'and not so many batteries were established as expected.'"

In the Estimates of the present year, which had been said to have the thumbmark of the Treasury upon them, there was an increase of 6,000 and odd men, as against an increase of 7,000 and odd which had been expected a few weeks ago. There was, however, a provision for keeping over 500 men of the Reserve at sea. These would not be trained seamen, but seamen or fishermen undergoing a six-months' training, intended ultimately to make them useful in the Reserve. The proposals for improving the Reserve were tentative, and might in the long run constitute an improvement, but they could do nothing for us immediately. These two main deficiencies to which he called attention, that in battleships and that in men, were known to the whole world. The Secretary of State for the Colonies had told them that it was unwise to reveal to the world the defects in our naval and military preparations. The late Minister of Marine of France, in revealing the defects of the French system to the general public, had uttered these words:—

> "The only naval facts not known to everyone who is concerned in knowing, are those as to mobilisation and plan of campaign."

Plan of campaign was a secret everywhere, but the facts as to mobilisation were fairly known; at least, he, himself, thought that he knew the French and German mobilisation facts; and doubtless they knew ours. At all events, our condition in men was known down to a single man by every Intelligence Department. Not only did we seem short as regarded the men with whom we were to begin war, but there was also the rapid loss of men in war to be considered; and no allowance had been made for sickness.

MR. GOSCHEN: Yes.

*SIR C. DILKE: How much, 10 per cent?

MR. GOSCHEN: Not so much.

*SIR C. DILKE continued: He had asked last year for a return which would set forth the exact facts, and that return had been refused; but, without going to hostile critics, the facts as disclosed by the First Lord himself were sufficiently grave. The First Lord could only man his ships by counting all officers, men, boys, coastguards, and marines available for sea-service, which meant practically almost the whole of these classes in existence, and adding from the Reserve. The First Lord questioned whether we should send all our fleet to sea at the beginning of a war, and said that the number to be sent to sea would depend on the nature of the enemy and the operations to be performed. The only war much worth considering in our calculations was a desperate war. No maritime Power was going to attack us single-handed; probably no two would ever do so; and the war more reasonably in view was one in which we should have to send to sea at once all ships not virtually obsolete. The First Lord said that by using up men, boys, coastguards, marines, and drawing 5,000 men from the Reserve he could man every ship that could be ready at once, a statement which somewhat begged the question, as all ships not obsolete ought to be ready at once in a dangerous condition of affairs. Every ship, he said, that could be reasonably sent to sea could be manned by using all he had, and the Reserve available for sea service, which had formerly been put at from 10,000 men by Admiral Tryon's Committee, to 8,000, but which was assumed in the Debate to be somewhat larger. Supposing all this was true, nothing was left for the waste of the first few weeks of war, and the proposals which were made for increase were not sufficient to fill this gap. A larger increase of men was now to be proposed, but not larger than was needed to man new ships, and all increase of Reserves took a considerable time before it could give us trained men. The Member for Dundee (Mr. Robertson) had supported the First Lord, and had said that we had more active service men than had our possible opponents. Our possible opponents, according to him were France and Russia, and he took no account of Germany. He overstated our own numbers and he understated the numbers of Foreign Powers. He quoted our own number as 93,850, whereas it was much short of that number at the time at which he spoke He quoted the French number as 41,500, but he omitted officers, and the real number at the time of which he spoke was 44,225. He quoted Russia at 30,600, whereas the real number was 39,249; and Russia and France together at the time at which he spoke had the same number as we possessed, while during a portion of the year the number of active service men in Russia and France exceeded our own. The French reserves were not only far larger than our own, but consisted more largely of trained and disciplined men. The calls upon our Fleet at the beginning of a war would be great indeed. The Government this year had adopted his own language upon this point and were going to increase the garrison of Sierra Leone; but there would be a call to convey heavy guns to India, to convey officers to India, and probably men, and, he fancied, a good many sudden calls from coaling stations in other portions of the globe. The question of the training of the Reserves was of the first importance. The *inscription* gave to the French Navy, and imitations of it gave to Russia and Germany, a power of expansion that we had not at command. Money could give us ships in two years of peace. Money could not give us men so quickly. Our necessary warfare at a great distance from our base would involve us in a tremendous strain and large reserves were required. Those reserves did not exist, while France had a surplus far larger than she could ever need. There was indeed so large a surplus of trained men available for the navy and kept for this purpose out of the army in France that French soldiers had a name for it. It was called "the lost army corps." The Member for Dundee in his reassuring speech had forgotten this immense reserve. The French got all their engineers, 90 per cent. of their stokers, and a large portion of artificers and of gunners from volunteers, but they had 120,000 men, exclusive of boys, on the lists of the *inscription*, of whom only 31,000 were over 40 years of age, leaving 89,000 men under 40 years of age who had served at sea on an average for nearly four years. Of the 44,000 men of the French Navy on active service 27,000 belong to the *inscription*, for there were 13,000 volunteers and 3,000 boys under the *inscription* age, besides officers. After making all deductions the French had available at least 105,000 trained sailors under 40 years of age. Now in France the total strength required to man the entire fleet was 64,000, including a full allowance for the average of sick men who would have to be replaced, while no such allowance was made with us, The French had, in their own belief, only some 12,000 men to find at once, while they were able to put their hands in two days upon 33,000 trained men of the Reserve—at least 20,000 more than were needed, who would form a force in the ports as a real reserve and as against casualties. France could obtain far more men even than this great number by calling out the *inscrits* under 35 years of years. He had recently asked as to whether the Admiralty had been consulted on a postal convention of August 30th 1890, allowing mail steamers to return without hindrance to their ports in time of war; and the French had arrangements for the return to their various headquarters of all the *inscrits* by mail steamer. By the ordinary call made from to time of three classes only —that is the Reserves of three years—France could complete the crews of all her fighting units, as was admitted by the Minister of Marine, "without attracting attention abroad." As regarded the French reserves, an order to mobilise, suddenly and unexpectedly given on the 22nd June 1891, had made the whole reserve division ready to sail on the 24th, and a similar experiment had shown that all the auxiliary cruisers could put to sea in 36 hours fully manned. M. Lockroy, in his book, had calculated that "the lost army corps" of trained men, that France could not possibly utilise in her fleets, consisted of 55,000 men, according to his own calculation it was 41,000 men; and yet the Member for Dundee had implied that France and Russia alone had fewer men than we had. He should not deal at length with the proposals which had been made for an improvement. The question remained really where it had been at the time when it formed the subject of essays written for the Gold Medal of the Royal United Service Institution, and which had been published last year, with the discussions to which they had led among the most competent persons. Commander Honner, in the Gold Medal Prize Essay, had pointed out that it would be impossible to break up the crews of commissioned ships on the outbreak of war, and that the ships fitted out at that time would have to receive an undue proportion of untrained Reserve men who had never seen guns fired, who had been drilled chiefly with obsolete guns, who had not the discipline and the experience required even for supply of ammunition to quick-firing guns, or for acting in magazine parties, and who were wholly unacquainted with turret drill and with torpedo work. He had shown that when the Reserve was created the regular service men had been sufficient to man all the ships, and the Reserve had thus been a true reserve, only intended to supply waste in war, whereas now it was needed at the outbreak of war. He had quoted Sir Geoffrey Hornby as showing that our Reserve men had not a training "to become seamen fit for war." He had then suggested that while the bulk of our war complement of seamen should be long-service men, as at present, a certain number of short-service men should be passed through the Navy to form a well-trained Reserve. He had also proposed that in all mail contracts, transport contracts, and other shipping contracts under Government, a large proportion of the crew should, by stipulation, be members of the Reserve. He had fully dealt with the reserve of stokers and firemen, showing that at the present moment, that was in the present financial year, we were very greatly short of stokers and firemen, and had not only no reserve at all, but not enough stokers and firemen to send our ships to sea. The weakest points of all, in his belief, were that we were 1,000 lieutenants short, and 3,000 stokers and firemen short of the numbers required to send the Fleet to sea. In the discussion, Commander Honner's proposals were generally approved. The figures which had been given as reassuring by the First Lord would not bear investigation. The total figures not only included the whole of the marines, but included also among those available for service at sea a great number not so available. They included, he feared, all the men who were required at the naval depôts, those needed for the naval defence of fixed defences, the training staffs of many schools, the staff of drill ships, the staff of signal stations ashore, and all the sick. Lieutenant Canis Crutchley, of the Royal Naval Reserve, had shown that a 10 per cent. allowance for sickness must be made. The strain of manning on the country was a mere trifle to that which it had formerly been. With our vastly-enhanced wealth, and our enormously increased population, we were called upon now (on the highest possible scale suggested) for fewer than half the men that we had actually had at sea in the King's ships in the great war. He could himself remember being on board the *Duke of Wellington*, when she was the flagship of a squadron at Spithead, when her 120 guns, with 10 men in each gun crew, meant that 1,200 men were needed to fight her; while now ships of the *Royal Sovereign* class had only 14 guns of any considerable size, with eight men in each gun crew, although, of course, the ammunition supply, and that for the quick-firing guns, needed many men. Still, what we now wanted were comparatively few. Unfortunately we had not got those few, and we were specially short in those members of the engine-room staff and those trained stokers, as well as those lieutenants, who took a very long time to make. We could not be looked upon as being in a satisfactory position for mobilisation until every ship in the service had her full complement of engineers, or, at all events, every ship not obsolete—that was not counting those which would be put out of service on the outbreak of war. We had not those provisions which even the Italians had at La Spezia for training stoker recruits in their special duties, and the breakdowns of the small craft which were frequent must be attributed to the utilisation of stokers before they were trained. It was useless to build ships nominally fast unless the engine-room staff was sufficient and perfectly trained. These deficiencies were not only known to all who watched the Fleet, but they were revealed to the public at manœuvre time. For example, the lieutenants and the stokers were used up now in manœuvres, and the ships that were not engaged in the annual manœuvres were ships for whom the lieutenants and the stokers did not exist. Behind the question of manning and Reserve, lay that of the ancient and true Reserve of the British Fleet—namely, the British Merchant Navy, which had become foreign so rapidly that, while only 14 per cent. had been foreign in 1885, over 36 per cent. were foreign in 1894, since which time again things had been rapidly becoming worse. The First Lord had said last year that he desired to decrease the number of foreigners in the Merchant Navy, if it could be done "by some means not artificial." This was a somewhat delphic, if not a cryptic, utterance. The effect of all that had been proposed up to the present time would be only to increase the number of British seamen who must be suddenly taken on the outbreak of war from those very ships in which British seamen would be most needed at the time, and the foreign element would only in consequence become more supreme in the Merchant Navy in time of war. The proposal, however, to more largely recruit the fishermen for Reserve purposes was in the right direction. As regarded seamen he was, he confessed, despondent. Nothing was now being done for training British seamen. The few apprentices now carried were premium apprentices, who became officers, and the P. and O., the British India, the White Star, and the Cunard carried neither ordinary seamen, boys, nor apprentices in their 208 steamers of 600,000 tons. He had the names of ships carrying large crews, in which there were none but foreigners, and of large numbers of ships in which there were few but foreigners; and while the great companies of which he had just spoken carried no foreigners, and carried most excellent seamen, they did, as he showed, nothing towards training seamen for the future. The Report of Sir Edward Reed's Committee had clearly shown decreasing numbers of British seamen, and yet nothing was to be done towards producing an improvement. The highest authority, in his opinion, on the subject—the captain of the *Worcester*, Lieutenant Wilson-Barker, of the Royal Naval Reserve—had pointed out the whole of the facts bearing on the case, and had summed up to the effect that they, "from a naval point of view, appeared likely to end in disaster." The inquiries made by Lord Brassey from all the ships' captains trading to Melbourne in reference to the manning of the Navy had shown that they believed that there was still a strong disposition on the part of the youths of the United Kingdom to adopt a seafaring life, but that the opportunities presented to them of following their inclination had all but disappeared. Apprentices now paid premiums from £10 upwards, and no others were trained except those who were either, on the one hand, persons who aimed at becoming officers, or, on the other, the waifs and strays of our great towns. There was a wide field open between the two. The First Lord of the Admiralty threw the duty on to the Board of Trade; the Board of Trade threw it back again to the Admiralty, and nothing was done. He should say nothing on other points which the First Lord knew he thought important, in connection with the efficiency of our Fleets, such as the possession of telegraph cables in our own hands, because superiority in strength in battleships and the manning of those ships with a view to their speedy mobilisation were his main points that night. It was said that we might rest content with the existing rapidity of our mobilisation, because the French arrangements, and which were better on paper, had broken down. Ours had never been subjected to the same test. In France civilian, below-the-gangway, Members of Parliament had been allowed themselves suddenly to call upon the dockyards to keep their paper promises, and send out on the officially recognised notice only all their second-class reserves. They had failed in some cases to keep their days; but should we succeed? Should we succeed in anything like the same degree? Would not our failure here be greater? Our cackling over the mobilisation of the Particular Service Squadron in January of last year looked as though we were content with a smaller power of performance than that which had been shown in the very failure of the French system to, nevertheless, actually exist in France. He himself, for 17 winters spending some weeks on the average in the chief naval port of France, had a high belief in the rapidity of mobilisation and in the readiness of the French Fleet. On the other hand, not only the facts about the Particular Service Squadron, but those known to him in other directions in this country, filled him with doubt about our own mobilisation. The Ashanti War, for example, had caused confusion in the victualling department of the Navy at the Victoria Yard. The preparation of the hospital ship for the Benin expedition had also caused confusion there. The annual mobilisation for the manœuvres took four months' preparation there, even in the case of articles which were supposed to be ready in 24 hours, and it was a question whether a test mobilisation, with the element of suddenness introduced, would not be more valuable, at least for one year, than our present manœuvres. The Report on the manœuvres of last year had not been issued, but in those manœuvres all pretence of rapid mobilisation had been abandoned. A fortnight had been given, even in the orders, for doing work which was supposed to be done in 48 hours upon our system, and the ships to be newly commissioned were very few in number. He still believed that slowness in taking the sea, as compared with, at least, France and Germany, was one of our chief weaknesses, and it was closely connected with the deficiency in men. It prevailed even in respect of that which was supposed to be at once ready—the Fleet Reserve. The direction of the Admiralty towards warfare by the increased power of control of their principal adviser, the First Naval Lord, was another matter to which he attached high importance, as was that to which the gallant Member opposite was to call attention—that peculiarity and deficiency in our system of coast defence, and of defence of naval bases, which Lieutenant Colwell, of the United States Navy, who had been sent to report upon it, had declared to be the worst in the world, and which had been virtually condemned by the present and by the late Secretary of State for War, as well as by the noble Lord the Secretary of State for India—a former First Lord of the Admiralty. But for to-night he would restrict his view to the points which he first named—the insufficiency of strength in battle fleet, and the insufficiency of preparation for the manning of our Fleet on mobilisation. It had been said that the proposals of the First Lord for this year had suffered from Treasury control. He could not believe it. The Defence Committee could not but hold the balance between the views expressed at Bristol by the Secretary of State for War and the contrary views expressed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and decide upon the relative share in national defence which the Army and the Navy respectively were to undertake. When that decision had been given the true economy must point to getting full value in both services for the fabulous sums they spent, and not to merely cutting down the Estimates thought necessary by the responsible Parliamentary head of the more necessary of the two great services. He, for one, believed that expenditure upon the British Navy was expenditure not on war but upon peace, and he held, with the American writer, that the maintenance of the relative strength of the British Navy was one of the best hopes and greatest securities of the peace of the world. [*Cheers.*]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. G. J. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): The right hon. Gentleman prefaced his remarks by stating, as he has done before, that his criticisms would not be directed against the present Board of Admiralty or the present First Lord personally, but against the system of Boards of Admiralty generally. I appreciate, as I have said before, the tone of the right hon. Gentleman's speech, and I know the study he has given to these most important matters. ["Hear!"] One preliminary remark I would like to make, and it is this. We are now, as everyone who has looked into these matters will be aware, in a transition period; we are moving at a very great rate in the direction of increasing the Navy, and within a comparatively short space of years we have increased our naval power by 50 per cent.; and, moving forward in this direction from year to year, there must be during that period difficulties which are almost insuperable, and which can only be conquered by time. We have increased the number of our ships, and we have to increase the number of our men, and there are some who think we can and should produce these men at once, but anyone who studied these questions knows that only in time can we provide sailors, stokers, officers, and engineers. The right hon. Gentleman complains that we have not got sufficient stokers, but the right hon. Gentleman must know that year by year we are increasing the number of our stokers at a rapid rate. It is useless to complain of deficiency when really efficient men cannot be secured. The right hon. Gentleman has spoken of the deficiency in our Mercantile Marine, so we have these two facts—on the one hand, the Navy rapidly increasing; and, on the other hand, a Mercantile Marine rapidly decreasing in the number of men in training. Of course, this last fact increases our difficulties. Experts know that we cannot go into the market and secure a certain number of sailors at once, though we have critics who say, "You do not ask for a sufficient number of men; why ask for 6,000; why do you not ask for 12,000 or 20,000 men?" Simply because they could not be got; we could not get trained men in such numbers, and we must get men and train them. Our policy is not to increase the number of men at a greater rate than we can train guns and all the equipments necessary for naval warfare. The right hon. Gentleman, in his concluding remarks, said he believes these are the Admiralty's own Estimates, and that they have not been cut down by the Treasury. That is so. As regards the number of men, the Estimate represents the deliberate and unanimous view of the Board of Admiralty that it is the right figure that should be taken, and we have not been influenced by any consideration as to the degree to which the number would swell the Estimates. It is a figure which represents the degree at which we can get men of a superior standard, boys of the proper character, and the degree of training we can give them. Even if we wished to take a larger number of boys and train them, we could not train them except in a certain proportion in ships with other crews. We have now three training ships for somewhat older boys, and by this means we are increasing our output—if I may use the expression—of boys who will soon become able seamen to a very great extent. Now, I invert the order of the subjects in my reply to the right hon. Gentleman, and speak in the first place of the *personnel*, to which he has devoted the chief part of his speech. I do not know whether he is aware—I suppose he must be aware, though perhaps he has not given sufficient attention to the point, but certainly the outside public are not aware—how, to a great extent the complement of men for our ships is not composed of sailors and engineers, but includes a large number of others. Some critics treat the matter as if we required some 10,000 or more trained men, but a ship's complement contains many men who have no claim whatever to be considered trained men at all. I can give the House, and I think it is right the House should know, some of the proportions of seamen in our modern ships. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the fact that we now required a smaller number of seamen in our complement for a ship than used to be required. It is so, not only a smaller number, but a smaller proportion of seamen. Take the case of the *Majestic*, the proportion of the seamen class required on board is 45 per cent. of the whole, or not quite half the number of men are seamen. Then there are 18 per cent. of the engineer class, 13 per cent. are marines, 3 per cent. are artificers, and there is a miscellaneous class of whom a large number are taken from outside, and under all circumstances should be taken from outside, and whom it would be perfect waste to keep in time of peace. In the *Powerful*, again, 36 per cent. are of the seamen class, in the *Talbot* 44 per cent., and in the *Valorous* 36 per cent. Even among stokers, though we do require some highly-trained men, there are some who are no more than coal trimmers, and can fairly be taken from outside as required. I do not say that we would take an ocean tramp and put him on board a torpedo destroyer; our proposals provide for a class of highly-trained stokers. We have a school for stokers which is superior to that of any other nation, and that is the ships in which they stoke. ["Hear, hear!"] We have a so much larger proportion of our fleet at sea on a war footing that we have a much better opportunity of training our stokers as a whole than any of those who have got any other class of school. ["Hear, hear!"]

*SIR C. DILKE: The school I was speaking of was a sea-going school.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: I think the right hon. Gentleman will find we have a much larger number of ships at sea even in proportion, and we are training a much larger number of men. As regards the training of stokers and engineers we follow a system by which we pass as many as possible through the torpedo destroyers at the home ports. We have squadrons of torpedo destroyers on which we put crews for a certain period, and when that period of study is completed we replace them by another crew, and, therefore, pass through them a considerable number of men. ["Hear, hear!"] I have made these remarks with reference to the 100,000 men who are required, but I should like upon that to come to a fallacy which underlies a good deal of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman. He suggested that in case of a great war we should mobilise every ship.

*SIR C. DILKE: I distinctly excluded those which are obsolete, and which ought to form a second line.

First Lord of the Admiralty.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: The right hon. Gentleman suggested, generally speaking, that every good ship should be mobilised. That is to say, we are to have no reserve ships. It is held by my colleagues at the Admiralty that, in the same way as you want a reserve of men, you must have a reserve of ships. [*Cheers.*] If you sent them all to sea you would have ships go wrong in their machinery and you would have no other ships to take their place. The right hon. Gentleman asks us to make allowance for men that are sick, but he does not himself make allowance for ships that are sick. [*Laughter.*] There may be accidents, such as happen to all squadrons and navies, especially in these days of great complications, when some accident may happen to machinery without any naval action, which would be more serious even than if a large number of men suffered from incapacity. The right hon. Gentleman speaks of loss and waste in the first weeks. I hope there will not be such a striking loss of men in the first weeks of a war. But there would be ships which would require to be replaced by other ships, and that I consider to be a probability against which you must guard. Therefore, the whole idea upon which these calculations are based, that you are going to send all your ships to sea at once, to my mind involves a mistake in strategy and involves a merely hypothetical case, which is more academical than actual. ["Hear, hear!"] The point is, can we man our ships as fast as we want them and as fast as those ships will be ready? The right hon. Gentleman and others speak of Reserves as if they have to be ready on the very day. They do not allow for the fact that a great number of ships will not be ready on that day. There are always a considerable number of ships that are under repair, and under these circumstances to look upon the idea that you must have your men ready on the first day is a hypothesis which will not be realised. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of Admiral Tryon's estimate of the number of Reserve men that would come forward. He said there were 10,000 at that time. I think the number of our total Reserves was less than it is now, therefore the proportion that would be available now would be larger than then. But besides these 10,000 were men who would come forward in the course of the first six weeks. In two months there would be a great deal more; in three months there would be still more, and it would be fully three months before a good many of them would be available. Let me dwell on the inconsistency of a good many of the critics who deal with the Reserve. On the one hand, they urge a large increase in the Reserve, who they say ought to go from our present figure to 50,000 or even 70,000 men, but yet at the same time say that we are depleting our Mercantile Marine, and so weakening it that it could not carry on its business during the first months of a war. I agree we must not deplete our Mercantile Marine, therefore, I do not think we can push the Naval Reserve beyond a certain point. Let me remind the House that our proposal is to increase the number of men by 6,300. This increase is a net increase. It was suggested last year, with reference to the increase of 4,900, that that was little more than would replace the waste. But the number of 6,300 is taken in addition to the entries necessary for replacing the waste. It does not represent these entries at all, but is an actual addition of men to the active list. It is sometimes thought that the column "average number borne" represents so many men whom we have not been able to get. That is not the case. It is not the number actually borne, but the supposed average of the year. The real point is, What is the actual number borne? I have had a paragraph introduced showing the actual number. The average number, as it was usually stated, would be 90,160, but on January 1 we had 92,322; on February 1, 93,309; and we are quite certain that by the end of the year we shall have every man whom the House of Commons allowed us to engage at the beginning of the late financial year. ["Hear, hear!"] We shall have the full number of men; we have been able to secure them without tampering with the standards, and we have been able to satisfactorily increase the numbers by that amount. ["Hear, hear!"] It was said that I had undertaken that I would only increase the numbers of men by 5,000 in the year. I never said anything of the kind. I said our policy would be a steady increase according to the calculations which we should make as regards the ships coming on, but I never pledged myself to any particular number. The right hon. Gentleman thought in my calculation as to the number of available men I had included those who were already included in the A Vote for other services. That is to say, that I had included boys under training, some pensioners, and others.

*SIR C. DILKE: I did not mention boys of this particular class, because I knew it was not so. What I mentioned was the training staff of schools and drill ships and signal staffs.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: Other critics have not been so observing, and it has been distinctly stated I have made a mistake of 10,000 men by adding in boys and others who were only fit for training. I never did anything of the kind, and in the calculation I made last year I did not include any except those who were on the active service list. I will now place before the House a few facts so that they may precisely see the great exertions we have made and at the same time the great difficulties we have had to encounter in bringing up the *personnel* to this necessary point. In five years, including the present financial year, we have added 26,000 men to the Navy. [*Cheers.*] I put it to my hon. and gallant Friends that this is equivalent to 26 battalions of the Line. If there had been 26 battalions added to the Line, it would have been thought a stupendous addition to the Army. ["Hear, hear!"] To show the right hon. Gentleman and the House how we have gone on *pari passu* with ship building, let me call their attention to the following particulars. The additions to be made to the Fleet by the end of the financial year 1897-98, by ships laid down by Lord Spencer's Board in 1894-96 consist of seven battleships, four first-class cruisers, ten second-class cruisers, two third-class cruisers, and 48 torpedo-boat destroyers. The crews required to man these 71 vessels when completed make a total of 15,550 men. Corresponding additions made to the *personnel* of the Fleet during the financial years 1894-95, 1895-96, 1896-97, give a total of 17,000 men; therefore, while on the one hand we have increased the number of ships by 71, we have not fallen behind in men, but added a sufficient number to man the ships. [*Cheers.*] This year we propose, as the House is aware, to add 6,300 men, as shown in the Estimates for 1897-98. It may be to the satisfaction of the House to know that we did not last year simply look at the year for which we were making the Estimates. We knew last year, when we asked for 4,900 men, that we should have to ask for as many if not more this year. Therefore we must add 12,000 men to the present strength when dealing with the war fleet of 1898-99. The additions to the Fleet by the end of the financial year 1897-98 by Lord Spencer's programme would consist of five battleships, four first-class cruisers, three second-class cruisers, six third-class cruisers, and 42 torpedo destroyers, and for these 11,620 men are required, and for the ships to be laid down in 1897-98—namely, four battleships, three third-class cruisers, and two torpedo destroyers—3,780 men, or 14,000 altogether. As I have said, it is proposed to add 6,300 men, as shown in the Estimates before the House for 1897-98, with a similar addition for 1898-99. If this is carried out, and the automatic growth of the seaman class for 1899-1900 (which may be taken approximately as 2,000 men) be added, there would be required to man the 140 vessels laid down, ordered, and proposed, 1894-95 to 1897-98, 30,950 men; the provision made and proposed was for 31,650 men, which will cover the whole of the modern ships. The total this year and the numbers we propose to vote is, in round figures, 100,000, and, if to that we add 6,300, that will be 106,300, and it is the opinion of my colleagues and myself that that is a point beyond which it would be impolitic and unwise to go in maintaining men on the active list, under the colours or at sea, in time of peace. For the remainder of the men who may be wanted we must depend on our Reserves. The right hon. Gentleman may say, "Suppose you build more ships?" Then they must take the place of the reserve or older ships, which will be continually falling out of use. It is not encouraging to build ships as we have done and to have it pointed out that it is impossible to man them. It is not your finest or newest ships, but the oldest, that would be left behind in time of war, and for which provision would have to be made as the war proceeded. I hope the House will see that we have done what we could, and, although some critics may say, "The Estimates are disappointing; we expected a great deal more," that we are moving forward at a pace corresponding to the interests of the country. But I think that, while we attend to the active list, the greatest attention should be paid to the Reserves, and it is for this reason we have proposed a scheme by which we believe the training of the Reserves will be greatly improved. It was said that the Reserves had no training at sea; we wish to give them that training. It was said that a great portion of the Reserves would be abroad when wanted; we are going to concentrate our forces at home. I hope a good supply will be had of fishermen who are to be sent to sea for six months' training, with another six months to qualify for apprenticeship. It is true that this is a tentative proposal. But we have not acted alone in the matter. We have consulted the Registrar General of Seamen. We have taken him into our counsel, and point by point put our plan before him. Some of our plans we have modified to meet suggestions he was kind enough to make, and we believe we have hit on a plan that will be successful. Hon. Members may say, "Why not increase the Reserve largely?" We will not increase the Reserve beyond our power of training. ["Hear, hear!"] We do not wish to have a force on paper. I said so last year and I repeat it now, and the convictions I expressed are largely embodied in the changes I have proposed. If they succeed, we shall undoubtedly have a better Reserve than in past years. But let hon. Members understand that of the Reserve of 25,000 men we shall not have only 10,000 available during the first six weeks or two months after the outbreak of war. It would be an extravagant system to pay 25,000 men with the knowledge that we should only have 10,000 immediately available. As to the remaining 15,000, I believe a large proportion of them would come up to fulfil the obligations for which they had a retaining fee and in regard to which they were promised a pension afterwards. The right hon. Baronet drew a comparison between our Reserves and the French. He spoke of the French Reserves as highly-trained men. They may have been highly-trained once. A considerable proportion may not have been to sea more than one year. Amongst these inscripts, as they are called, are a large number who could, for various reasons, claim exemption and to be let off one year, and their total necessary training now under the short service system is three and a-half years. After they have served three or four years they remained liable to be called upon for three years after that, and every ten years they have to drill twice for 28 days, not at sea, but in port. The French inscripts include men who have not been to sea for 20 or 30 years, and there are a great many among them who have only done 28 days' drill in ten years. In these Debates all the weaknesses of our naval system are insisted upon, while those of continental nations in comparison with ourselves are often overlooked. ["Hear, hear!"] Then we have 10,000 pensioners, a body of seasoned men who would be of incalculable value. It is suggested that they would not be forthcoming when required, but a Naval Reserve man would be treated as a deserter if he did not respond when called upon to fulfil his duties in time of war, and seamen pensioners are distinctly liable to be called upon to serve. They are required to serve in the Navy in any emergency if not absolutely incapable.

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): Are the 10,000 pensioners naval pensioners?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: Yes, naval pensioners; besides the 6,000 Royal Naval Reserve there are 4,000 pensioners partly marines and partly seamen, and every pensioner is bound to serve on an emergency whether he is in the Reserve or not. If he is in the Reserve he gets payment, if not he gets no payment, but his liability to serve his country remains the same. I do not know why the right hon. Gentleman should omit those 10,000 pensioners, because I would point out that that is a very material force. If you have 25,000 Reserve men, 10,000 pensioners, and 100,000 on the active list, we get a total force of 135,000 men, on whom we have as much title to call in time of emergency as the French have to call upon their inscripts or conscripts or any of the forces to which the right hon. Gentleman alluded.

CAPTAIN BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness): Are not the pensioners old men?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: I have only given the figures of those not incapacitated. There are a certain number, 2,000 or 3,000, who are incapacitated, but I have only taken those who are not incapacitated. I do not put them forward as men who are fit to assist in the navigation of our first-class ironclads, but they are not older than a great many of the inscripts to whom the right hon. Gentleman attaches so much importance. They are distinctly men who know the duties on board ship, and who would assist in strengthening the crews.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesbrough): Are any of these pensioners cooks, stewards, or stokers?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: No; they are seamen and marine pensioners, and they do 14 days' drill every year, so that I can assure the hon. Member that that is not so. I am sure it is desirable that the case should be fully placed before the House. ["Hear, hear!"] To sum up, we have 100,000 men on the active list, 25,000 men in the Royal Naval Reserve, whom we wish to improve year by year, and, besides that, we have 10,000 pensioners. Now let me ask another question. Hon. Members should bear in mind that year by year a considerable number of seamen take their discharge after 12 years' service. These men become yachtsmen, or enter to a certain degree into civil employment, but they are a large number of sturdy seamen who have had their 12 years' service at sea, and who are in the country. I refuse to believe that in an emergency a considerable number of these men might not be got from those who have been trained at sea, and who, at all events, by a bounty if necessary, would be attracted to the service. I will not call it a large resource, but when the right hon. Gentleman spoke of the crews in old times I would point out that a great many of those were recruited from men who had never been at sea and were soldiers. One of our great naval battles was won by a regiment of soldiers who were placed on board ship. The House must bear in mind that on these men-of-war we do not require more than a certain proportion of seamen and engineers, and that there is much work which can be done by men carrying ammunitions and by men who would volunteer from the shore. It is the distinct opinion besides of those who have looked into this matter that there is a considerable resource of men who could be got from outside sources. I indicate them, but I do not dwell upon them, but it is an element which ought not to be entirely overlooked. I have shown the House what I conceive to be our resources. I reiterate that I do not wish to magnify them; I admit the difficulties in which we stand during a period of transition. But now I would inquire what are the remedies which are proposed by others, and what course is urged upon us different from the course which we are following. The right hon. Gentleman alluded to one; it was to run a short-service system side by side with the long-service system. That system was taken up by others, but it is condemned by naval opinion. ["Hear, hear!"] It was withdrawn after a certain time, and it was admitted that the bulk of naval opinion was against it. The difficulties of running a long-service and a short-service side by side would be extremely great—["hear, hear"]—the complications would be very great, and, at all events, so long as I hold my present position, I say in the strongest possible terms that I will not be driven to do anything which might shake in any degree the long-service system in the Navy—[*cheers*]—which I believe is one of the cardinal points of the present position. ["Hear, hear!"] It sounds, possibly, easy to have these 5,000 men running side by side with the long-service men, but, supposing we carried out that suggestion, what security have we that the men who have been five years on a man-of-war would then go into the Mercantile Marine and remain at our disposal? That is a point on which I should like to hear something from the shipowners. There is another proposal besides the short-service system to which the right hon. Gentleman alluded, and that is that the Government should undertake the training of boys for the Mercantile Marine. I have seen the proposal put forward by which the various duties could be carried out. It has been suggested that the Government should give £35 for each apprentice, who is to serve four years in the Mercantile Marine, and after one year's service in the Navy he is to pass into the Royal Naval Reserve. Again I say you have no security that these men would pass into the Mercantile Marine at all. Those who put forward these schemes may expect also that the shipowners should do something. On that I have got rather a strong feeling. The right hon. Gentleman has pointed to the difficulties of the Mercantile Marine. If it comes to this, that the shipowners cannot or will not employ British seamen in sufficient numbers, what is to become then of the maritime greatness of the country? Are we as a State to undertake so to nurse this profession that we are artificially to produce these men? I do not know what it is that prevents the expansion of our Mercantile Marine; I do not know whether the fault lies, as some allege, with the shipowners—[Mr. HAVELOCK WILSON: "Low wages"]—who wish to engage men at a cheaper rate—["hear, hear"]—or whether it lies with the men who, under certain compulsion, are occasionally driven to make regulations which make it difficult for the shipowners to comply with their conditions. [*Cheers.*] I do not say on which side the truth is, but this is a difficulty which, I believe, cannot be overcome by the State. The right hon. Gentleman said the matter had been bandied to and fro between the Admiralty and the Board of Trade. I think it ought to be bandied to and fro between the shipowners and sailors and the public at large. For my part I should certainly be sorry to increase the Navy Estimates by putting upon them the training of men for the Mercantile Marine without any security whatever that when the time came we should gain men proportionate in number to the expense incurred. To sum up the question of the *personnel*, I say that there is no counter proposal which has been made as to a steady increase of the *personnel* and an improved training in the Reserve that will hold water. I see nothing better than to pursue the present steady and sober increase, by training boys year by year, taking stokers as we are taking them, and increasing the number of marines as we are increasing them now. I frankly say, that being the policy of the Admiralty, it will take a great deal to move us from those lines by any of the pressure which during the last year it has been attempted to put upon us. Let me warn the House of this—there is nothing more dangerous, when no clear reform or expedient can be suggested, than to press for some impossible changes. The temptation might be to try something in an empirical way in order to secure more public opinion behind, and to undertake larger operations in which you did not yourself believe. That is a course which certainly I should decline to take, and I believe, notwithstanding the difficulties which are created by the rapid expansion of the Fleet, we are proceeding on the right lines; and until our critics are able to propose something better than they have proposed, I hope we shall be supported by public opinion in the course we are pursuing. [*Cheers.*] The right hon. Gentleman said that we have made no progress in our position, in relation to France and Russia, since 1893, when the Conservative Party moved a vote of censure on the then Liberal Government for the insufficiency of their naval programme. I have not had an opportunity of looking into the position of 1893 since the right hon. Gentleman has spoken; but at all events, I say that, if we were to go to war to-morrow with two great maritime Powers, we have, as the Papers submitted to the House show, a superiority over them. [*Cheers.*] I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman disputes that point.

*SIR C. DILKE: I said that you were dissatisfied with the position in 1893; but comparing the return of 1893 with the return dated August, 1896, and circulated in November, 1896, in that time the number of ships we have built is seven, and the number built by France and Russia, 11.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: At all events, we have now a superiority in numbers, and I believe we have a distinct and considerable superiority in the class of our ships. [*Cheers.*] I think the right hon. Gentleman desired to be fair, and to put both sides of the Question before the House—he showed in what we were strong, and he showed in what he considered we were weak. But there is one point he did not call attention to—a point which every naval man knows the value of, and which our foreign rivals know the value of—I refer to the homogeneous character of our Fleet. [*Cheers.*] If you take the Channel Squadron or the Mediterranean Squadron, there is no squadron that any two other countries could put to sea which would be able to compete with either of those squadrons. [*Cheers.*] Every hon. Member knows that the speed of a squadron is the speed of its slowest ship. We have now the Channel Squadron and the Mediterranean Squadron, and if you add the other vessels we have 17 ships which are entirely unrivalled as a group. [*Cheers.*] We have nine *Majestics* nearly finished, eight of the *Royal Sovereign* class, or 17 ships altogether, which, whatever our critics may say, form a group so homogeneous, so strong, so successful in every way, that if 17 other ships were put against them they would not be able to compete with them. [*Cheers.*] The designs of our ships have also been so exceptionally successful, that when the vessels were completed they fully realised all expectations as to speed and strength. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the quicker shipbuilding of France. But it must be remembered that ships may be launched at different stages of contruction; and it therefore does not follow that if one ship is rapidly launched and that another is not so rapidly launched, that the one is necessarily behind the other in respect of completion. The right hon. Gentleman compels me to speak of the relative imperfection of other fleets. It is a subject on which otherwise I would not care to dwell. There is a considerable number of French ships which have been behind time according to the French programme, and have been unable to take their places at the time appointed in the squadron in the Mediterranean or at Brest; and I am still inclined to believe that we still hold the field not only relatively, but in the same proportions as before, with reference to the greater speed with which we can build our ships. If ever I require consolation for the attacks which are sometimes made in the Press and elsewhere upon the Admiralty, I have only to seek out what is said of the French Navy in France to enjoy the distresses of others. [*Laughter.*] The one thing that is held up in France is the superior administration of our dockyards in regard to the quicker building of our ships, and the manner in which they correspond in their designs, and are ready when they are wanted. [*Cheers.*] If I am not mistaken there have been a good many changes amongst the constructors in France. Why? Because the results obtained of certain ships had not corresponded to the designs sent them. ["Hear,

hear!"] I say, therefore, we hold distinctly an advantageous position. We have even a slight superiority as regards numbers; we have a great superiority in the homogeneousness of our ships, and in their successful designs; we retain our lead as regards rapid construction; and I venture also to repeat what I said last year, that the forces of two countries, where the ships are constructed on different designs, on different speed, and under different classifications, will not be able to contend on equal terms, even if equal in numbers of ships, with another Power having a homogeneous force managed by one administration, and not having to depend on the various contingencies to which any alliance must be exposed. ["Hear, hear!"] The right hon. Gentleman said that the Russian forces have been largely increased in the Mediterranean, and that they were now dangerously equal to our own. If that is so, we have at Gibraltar, at the entrance to the Mediterranean, in addition to our Mediterranean Squadron, the Channel Squadron, the most powerful squadron that has ever at peace time been at sea, always within call, and ready for any duties it might be called upon to perform. [*Cheers.*] The right hon. Gentleman need not be under any apprehension at present that there is any danger of our being inferior in numbers or in power in any sea where we may be encountered. I repeat that I am reluctant to have to make these statements, which may sound as if we were boastful; but when allegations are put forth by an authority such as the right hon. Gentleman, and repeated in a thousand exaggerated forms by others, it is necessary that a counter statement should be made, and I have attempted to make it in as moderate terms as I possibly could. [*Cheers.*] The right hon. Gentleman spoke of a reduction in our Estimates this year, and referred to the reduction of the dockyard hands by 1,500. These were special men taken on last year to hasten the completion of certain ships. They were engaged by special contract, for a special purpose, and were not to be continued after that specific contract had expired. The right hon. Gentleman need not fear that there is any change in our policy, any zig-zag, as he calls it, in our system. We are moving on precisely the same lines as last year; and this reduction was simply caused by our having completed the special object for which those men were engaged. ["Hear, hear!"] Then in regard to the Estimates. Last year we made a special effort, and this year we are making a special effort. Our Estimates are still vastly in excess of the Estimates of previous years. But we are reproached on one particular item in regard to which there is a falling-off; but that falling-off does not more than represent the relief which has been thrown on 1897-98 by the special effort which was made last year. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the danger of a combination of more Powers than the two Powers which are generally assumed to be our possible antagonists. He repeated a statement of mine that, if there was a great combination, we must trust in Providence and a good Admiral. Let the country thoroughly understand that it is impossible for one Power, however rich, to be able to face a combination of all other countries. [*Cheers.*] Take Germany itself. If France, Russia, Austria, and this country were to combine against Germany, what could Germany do? She would fight to the last, trusting in a good General and Providence. That would be the fate of any country in these days, when there are so many great military and naval Powers. We have only to go forward on such lines—we are bound to go forward on such lines—as would meet any reasonable contingency. We are bound to move forward making every possible exertion, but not hurrying beyond the capacity of production either of ships, or, if I may use the phrase, of men. Some say, "Why not lay down more ships?" But ships require armour, and armour requires great preparations and time in order to produce it. ["Hear, hear!"] Thus we face the situation with a determination to go forward on steady and moderate lines, not thinking, I am bound to say, of the amount of our Estimates, because we can plead no excuse that the House of Commons would not grant us, I might say, whatever money we asked for. [*Cheers.*] If, therefore, we do not produce larger Estimates, it is because, looking the facts in the face as to what can and ought to be done, we consider that in the programme which we have laid before the House, and in our proposals for the increase of the *personnel*, we have done what is required of us, what should satisfy the country, and what should not give any cause of alarm to any of our possible rivals. [*Cheers.*]

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON said that in listening to the speech of the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean he found himself rather on the side of the Admiralty. But while, in the main, he had nothing but what was favourable to say of the proposals of the Government, there were some matters on which his views were not favourable. At this moment one portion of the great Fleet of this country especially attracted public attention; and while observing the rule which forbade the discussion of foreign policy in connection with the Army and Navy Estimates, the House was entitled to know what was the exact status of any squadron at a particular moment, and what that squadron was doing. He might ask many questions which he should not ask about the Fleet in Cretan waters, as, for example, about the non-naval duties which were being intrusted to British naval officers. But the point to which he wished to direct attention was the line taken by the First Lord of the Treasury. About a week ago the right hon. Member for the Stirling Burghs asked whether the Government would produce the Admiralty instructions to the Commander of the Fleet in Cretan waters. A sort of conditional promise was given, but next day, when the Question was repeated, the First Lord of the Treasury refused to lay the instructions on the Table, saying:—

> "It has never been the practice to make public the instructions to military or naval officers on active duty."

That was a statement which he challenged, and he contended that the First Lord of the Treasury was quite wrong. Of course, there were strategic instructions issued to Admirals which no one would ask for, and which no Government would make public. The Admiral on every station had strategic instructions which would enable them to act in every likely contingency. But what the Government were asked to produce were instructions showing the political nature of the service on which the Fleet in Cretan waters was engaged. In 1878, a more critical time than the present, just such a demand was made by the then Marquess of Hartington with reference to the movement of the Mediterranean Fleet; and on January 28 Sir Stafford Northcote read to the House the instructions sent to the British Admiral, which were headed "most secret," and which were dated January 23. The only other occasion on which such a demand could have been made was in 1886, when a Liberal Government had ordered the Mediterranean Fleet to join in a pacific blockade of the coast of Crete. Information was asked for, and within a few weeks a Parliamentary Paper was issued containing the communications which had been made to the British Admiral. Therefore the First Lord of the Treasury was wrong in saying that it was the practice not to give these Instructions. There was another matter. About a week ago the First Lord of the Admiralty made a speech at a City dinner in which he undertook to defend the conduct of the British naval officers acting in Cretan waters. [*Cheers.*] The right hon. Gentleman said:—

> "I implore you not to believe every story you may see against the honour and capacity and the prudence of British naval officers." [*Cheers.*] "I, for my part, whatever may be the effect on anybody else, as the head of the Admiralty, intend to stand by the action which the Admirals have taken."

[*Cheers.*] That statement was entirely superflous and supererogatory. It gave a false impression of any criticism which might have been made of the action of the Admirals. The British naval officers were the servants of the First Lord of the Admiralty, who was the servant of the Government; who were the servants of the House of Commons. As head of the Admiralty the right hon. Gentleman was not called upon to defend the action of naval officers. This strong language of the right hon. Gentleman's was wholly beside the mark, and gave a false impression of what any sensible person would think of saying.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: All the critics are not sensible persons. [*Cheers.*]

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON said that he had never heard anyone allege that what had been done was a dishonour to the naval officers.

CAPTAIN BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness): No, it was called a disgrace. [*Cheers.*]

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON said that it might have been called a disgrace to the Government.

Captain BETHELL: No, a disgrace to the British Navy. [*Cheers.*]

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON said that of course the officers and men acted according to orders, and it was not for them to consider the character of the policy which they carried out. His complaint was that the First Lord of the Admiralty had undertaken their defence, not in his capacity as a member of the Government, but in his special capacity as First Lord of the Admiralty, so giving undue weight to statements which he himself had not heard made. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] It was an unfortunate mode of vindicating the honour of men whose honour had not been attacked, and the capacity of men whose capacity was manifest to the whole nation. He was in entire accord with what the First Lord of the Admiralty had said in answer to the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean. The right hon. Gentleman had recalled some figures which he (Mr. Robertson) had submitted to the House on a similar occasion last year. These figures he took out when he was at the Admiralty three years ago, and he rather flattered himself that he had discovered something in the nature of a new defence of the Admiralty. His object last year was not to vindicate the comparative numbers of the men in our service and in foreign services, but to show that while the navies of France and Russia had undoubtedly increased very greatly during the last ten years, their *personnel* had not. The number of men in the British Navy, on the other hand, had gone up by 50 per cent. in that period, and if this country was reasonably safe ten years ago we were in a very much better position now. With regard to the Royal Naval Reserve, he congratulated the First Lord on the new movement he had instituted this year for securing increased efficiency. So far as he could gather the proposal was in principle well calculated to bring about that result. But the scheme did not deal with the number of the Royal Naval Reserve. In the ten years from 1887 to 1897 the strength of the British Navy on the active service list had increased from 62,500 to 100,050, or something like 80 per cent. But in the same period the strength of the Royal Naval Reserve, including Naval Volunteers, had only increased from 20,000 to 23,000. If the proportion between the Reserves and the active services was safe as it stood ten years ago, ought that proportion not to be maintained now? The figures he had given established a *primâ facie* presumption in favour of increasing the Royal Naval Reserve. He was glad that a small beginning was made in this year's Estimates, and he would welcome any scheme by which this portion of the strength of the Fleet might be further increased. With regard to ships, a Return, obtained at the request of the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean, gave statistics of all the great navies of the world other than our own. From this he found that the battleship strength of these navies stood at 660,000 tons, while the tonnage of the battleships of this country was 465,000 tons—["hear, hear!"]—or two-thirds of the strength of all the other effective navies in the world. Coming to ships building, the tonnage of the foreign nations amounted to 253,000 tons, while this country had a total tonnage in ships building of 170,000 tons. ["Hear, hear!"] Judged from that point of view, he did not think there was any material fault to be found with the strength of our tonnage. The House ought, however, to have some explanation of why the addition of four battleships was now to be made. He did not challenge it, but the defence made by the First Lord pointed to a maximum being attainable, and likely to be attained very soon, and was rather against this addition to our battleships. He had no doubt the proposed increase was founded on the relative growth of other navies, and, if that were so, he feared it cut away the foundation of the First Lord's hopes that in a few years we should have reached our maximum strength in ships and possibly in men. He did not want to say anything about any other ships than battleships, but there was one other vessel mentioned in the First Lord's statement which would have to be justified to the common sense, and he would even say to the loyalty, of the House of Commons. The sentence to which he referred was in these words:—

> "A new yacht for Her Majesty the Queen is to be laid down at Pembroke. The design is now in hand.'

He was not going now to challenge that addition to the Navy. He would, however, remind the House that there was a small fleet of Royal yachts in existence already, that they had been most expensive, that they were not very much in use, and that the proposal to add to the number was one the reasons for which every Member of the House was bound to be satisfied upon. There was one condition, perfectly consistent with the most unbounded loyalty, which was demanded by a pure sense of justice to the service. His view about every item of expenditure in the Navy Estimates was that it should go to the strengthening of the Fleet as a great fighting machine. What he would suggest was that this new Royal yacht should be utilised as a fighting vessel as well. There was no difficulty about that. Royal yachts in other navies were capable of being used as fighting ships, and was there any reason why this should not be done in reference to this proposed accession to the Royal Navy? If that were proposed—and he was rather inclined to think it was proposed—any objection he might otherwise entertain to this addition would be if not entirely, at least in great part removed. He desired to say a word as to the singular circumstances under which these Estimates were presented to the House. He did not know when the Estimates were so late as they were this year, but be that as it might, it was a fact that four weeks ago the great body of information contained in the First Lord's statement was made known to the world by a Scotch Unionist newspaper. How that came about he did not know, but the internal evidence went to show that it could not have been obtained otherwise than through official sources, and no official communication of the kind could have been other than a violation of the spirit if not of the letter of the Official Secrets Act. They almost took proceedings against a paper which had placed itself in such a position, and he did not think it was right this sort of communication should be allowed. This statement had really been before the public for three or four weeks, though there were two items in which there was a difference. Those differences were reductions, and it was those differences showing reductions in an otherwise inspired statement which had led to the universal belief that the First Lord had either been beaten by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or had changed his own mind. He thought it hardly fair to Members of the House who wanted to raise general questions that they should be called upon to discuss these Estimates when they had only been before the House two days. He hoped the First Lord of the Admiralty would, in these circumstances, not attempt to take anything in the way of money but would allow an opportunity for the further consideration of the Estimates.

SIR ARTHUR FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk) said he desired to express his satisfaction with the general character of the Estimates placed before the House. He believed they were of such amount and contained such proposals as would be satisfactory to the country, and would give them an assurance that the safety of the nation was being properly and well cared for by the Admiralty. He was glad the right hon. Baronet had raised the question of the *personnel* of the Navy, because it was one of great importance. He thought, however, that the right hon. Gentleman had unnecessarily raised a doubt in the mind of the country as to the sufficiency of the provisions for the manning of the Fleet. They had to thank the First Lord for so fully and frankly explaining the points in connection with the manning of their ships. They were now able, by the figures, which were given for the first time in his remembrance, to form an opinion as to the sufficiency of their resources for manning the Fleet. The number of men required to man the whole of the ships that could be put to sea, including those that would be completed at the end of next year, would be something like 115,000 to 120,000. As the First Lord pointed out, it was a mistake, in dealing with these figures, to suppose that that represented the number of men necessarily to be trained in the Navy for naval purposes. It was that supposition in the public mind that so often misled them as to the resources of the country and the number of men available for manning their Fleet. He had taken some little trouble to look into the proportion of men who ought to, and must, be trained before they could be fit to go on board their ships compared with the number of men who might be picked up outside without such naval training, but who had sufficient knowledge to go on the ships in case of emergency. Taking the figures given by the First Lord he calculated that the absolute number of trained men required to man the whole of their vessels would be something like 76,000, while 40,000 men, accustomed to similar work outside the Navy, could be got on an emergency. Then there were 3,000 firemen in the Royal Naval Reserve, so that the total number of officers and men required to man the ships next year, when ready, would be something like 72,000 and we had 73,000 on the Estimates to be available of the Royal Naval Reserve and continuous service men. These figures clearly demonstrated that there need be no anxiety as to the sufficiency of men provided by the Admiralty for ships constructed or in course of construction. But a point of prominent importance was where were the Reserves to come from to meet the casualties that would arise in warfare: could the Mercantile Marine supply them; was the Royal Naval Reserve increasing at a proper rate? He ventured to say that the Royal Naval Reserve, which was soon to be brought up to something like 25,000 men, was the extreme number the Admiralty were likely to obtain out of the merchant service. Those who had looked into this matter very carefully estimated that the maximum number of British seamen, excluding Lascars, to be found in merchant ships would not exceed at the outside 40,000.

*Mr. GIBSON BOWLES inquired whence the right hon. Gentleman obtained his figures?

Sir ARTHUR FORWOOD said from an estimate made by a very competent gentleman who took the greatest interest in these matters at the last shipowners' conference in London. His estimate of the number of British-born seamen in British merchant ships was 40,000. We had obtained in the Royal Naval Reserve almost the maximum that it was possible to obtain from the Mercantile Marine, and even that number, should they be taken by the Admiralty, would undoubtedly greatly cripple the Mercantile Marine in case of war. It was quite true that the available number of men for Reserves in the Mercantile Marine were steadily diminishing, and our merchant service, as at present constituted, was no longer a school for the training of seamen. There were a few boys carried in some of the steamers but they were comparatively few, and whatever nursery there was for the youths of to-day was to be found in the coasting trade, and in the few and fast diminishing number of sailing ships left. When this question of manning the Reserves was brought before the Manning Committee they ventured to make a suggestion, one of the few unanimous suggestions that came from that Committee, that it would be desirable for the Admiralty to establish a larger number of boys' training ships at different ports, then give the boys one or two years' training on those ships, and then if it did not suit the Admiralty to engage the boys immediately they were trained for vessels in the Navy, they might be allowed to engage for short voyages in merchant ships, with the right to call upon them at any time they might be required for the Navy. The First Lord had alluded to a suggestion that bonuses should be allowed to shipowners for training boys, but he had never heard that put forward by any representative shipowner as coming from the class, but, speaking generally, the feeling of shipowners was that if a reliable class of British seamen were to be trained and brought up for employment in British ships, clearly the only way would be to establish training ships at different ports at public expense, giving the public service a claim upon them when they became seamen. The First Lord remarked upon the large number of foreign seamen employed in British merchant ships, and he suggested that it might be the question of wages that influenced this, but that was not so. The wages paid to foreign seamen were just the same as the wages paid to British seamen. Foreigners who came to this country received a much higher rate of pay than they received in vessels of their own country, and the fact was they were more amenable to discipline, more sober and better conducted than the average of British seamen to be found in our ports. Why it was so he did not know, but it was the fact, and as shipowning was a commercial undertaking, shipowners were not to be blamed if they selected the best men they could find for the working of their ships. He turned to another point, and the references of the right hon. Baronet to the comparative position of England in regard to battleships. As compared with foreign countries the figures furnished to the House, and the statements made with the Estimates amply justified a feeling of satisfaction that we are to-day holding an excellent comparative position, and when the contemplated battleships were laid down we should hold a very good position. Great Britain has 45 battleships ready against a total of 39 of the two Powers of whom so much had been said. Then we have seven on the stocks as against six of the two Powers, we have three launched, and they have five. But when he turned to the question of celerity in building them, he found that those vessels we had on the stocks were likely to be available for service much sooner than the vessels in course of construction by our rivals. Of the three last battleships added to our Fleet, the *Magnificent*, laid own in 1893, was completed in 1895, the *Prince George*, laid down in 1894, was completed in 1896, and the *Victorious*, laid down in 1894, was completed in 1896. These ships took between two and three years to construct, and their average tonnage was 14,900. Compare with these the three last vessels added to the French Navy. The *Carnot* was laid down in 1891 and was not completed until 1896, the *Martel* laid down in 1891 was completed in 1896, and the same time in the same years was occupied in building the *Jauréguibery*. The average tonnage of these ships was 10,380, as against the average 14,900 of the British ships, and they were between five and six years in building. The result reflected great credit on our dockyard administration and the satisfactory change introduced bv his noble Friend (Lord G. Hamilton). When administration was spoken of credit should be given where it was due, and the House should know that the country got good value for its money. The *Prince George* was built at Portsmouth, and cost, including £150,000 for indirect charges, £901,000. The *Victorious*, built at Chatham, cost, including indirect charges, £891,000, and the *Hannibal*, built at Pembroke, always a cheap yard, cost £872,000. These were satisfactory illustrations of dockyard work and the advantage of quick building. Sister ships to these, the *Mars* and *Jupiter*, built by contract, cost £896,000 and £895,000 respectively. One other remark, for which he claimed the First Lord's attention. The right hon. Gentleman had given some interesting figures as regards results obtained with the new types of boilers adopted to a large extent for vessels in the Navy. The *Powerful* on her 30 hours' trial burned 453 tons of coal. Given the indicated power of the vessel and translating that indicated power and comparing it with the first mercantile steamers of the day, he found that the merchant vessel would have burned 310 tons. Taking the weights of the boilers of the *Powerful*, and comparing them with the power given as indicated by the boilers, and with the results obtained by the best mercantile vessels, he found the weight of the boilers in the merchant vessels was precisely the same as that of the boilers in the *Powerful*. Therefore, from the point of view of consumption, this vessel was evidently consuming a very considerable quantity of coal. Probably, when they arrived at Vote 8, and were dealing with the matters connected with the Building Vote, the right hon. Gentleman would be able to give them some further information as regarded the introduction of this patent. He felt quite certain that the Estimate, as presented, would give general satisfaction, and he, for one, did not share in the slightest degree in the anxiety as to the sufficiency and strength of the British Navy to cope with any reasonable combination of Powers that might be brought against us.

Mr. HUDSON KEARLEY (Devonport) remarked that the right hon. Baronet who had last spoken had referred to the water-tube boilers as being still in an experimental stage. There used to be a good deal of controversy on the subject, but now there appeared to be an absence of criticism as to these new boilers. He thought, therefore, the House would be disposed to agree that they had got beyond the experimental stage, and, for his part, he considered that the water-tube boilers might be pronounced a success. The First Lord of the Admiralty had referred to the necessity of maintaining a reserve of ships as well as a reserve of men, but, in reply to a right hon. Gentleman on the Opposition side of the House, he said it would not be the policy of the Admiralty to mobilise all those ships at once. Did the right hon. Gentleman mean that those ships were to remain in the harbours without crews, or that they would be kept close at hand in the Channel or somewhere else? He did not believe public opinion would support such a policy as that—that we should have these ships, on which the country had spent so much money, lying idly by without munitions or men. ["Hear, hear!"] It might be a good theoretical policy, but if war were to break out it could not be maintained for long, because there was very little doubt that the Power or Powers with whom we were at war would make a stupendous effort and put every available force which they could command on the sea; and, of course, we should have to follow suit. Proceeding with the First Lord's statement, he noticed that there was a proposal to reduce the shipbuilding Vote this year. An explanation was offered as to why that was necessary, viz., that the expenditure had been anticipated and provided for in the Vote of last year. But there was no guarantee that it would necessitate the discharge of a large number of men, because the wages Vote was reduced by £113,000, and the number of the reduction would be 1,600.

The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY pointed out that the reduction would be chiefly in the number of men put on for special service last year.

Mr. KEARLEY was aware that a number of men were put on last year to meet the high pressure under special contract, but that would only meet the case to a limited extent. Many men had already been discharged. What he wanted to see avoided was a return to that mischievous policy of hot and cold blasts which had been so much condemned in that House in recent years. He remembered in 1887, the month before Christmas, the number of men discharged at Portsmouth and elsewhere was so large that the municipalities had the utmost difficulty in knowing how to deal with them. He did not want to see a return to that state of things; and he would suggest that these discharges could be obviated very much if preference were given by the Government in the way of employment to their own workmen. The building yards of the country naturally expected a share of the work; but when it came to a question of large reduction of labour he thought the Government should first see that their own yards were fully occupied. Although he was aware the Government was going to give Devonport the fitting out of a battleship and a cruiser, he would suggest that there was room for another gunboat. They were going to build this year four gunboats, all of which were going into contract yards. He had made inquiries, and there seemed to be a general impression that one of those gunboats should be given to Devonport. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Goschen) smiled. He did not want to see those whom he represented out of employment.

The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY: I was smiling at the accuracy of the hon. Gentleman's information.

Mr. KEARLEY: The accuracy or the inaccuracy?

The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY: I said the accurate knowledge.

Mr. KEARLEY: I am much complimented, and I hope the right hon. Gentleman will bear it in mind. [*Laughter.*] Passing from construction, he referred to the question of the *personnel.* The right hon. Gentleman admitted a shortage on the 1st of January of 1,400 men. Supplemental information showed that that shortage had already considerably diminished, and the First Lord contemplated that before the end of the year the whole number voted would be made up. He, however, rather doubted that, especially in view of the right hon. Gentleman's admission that some difficulty had been experienced in obtaining the necessary number of engine room artificers and artisans, owing to the revival of the shipbuilding trade. But this was no new difficulty; it was a difficulty that had harrassed the Admiralty for years, and it was a matter of general discussion in the engineering profession that the Admiralty found it very difficult indeed to get skilled artificers and artisans, but the Admiralty never seemed to care to confess what was the real reason. It had been pointed out to them repeatedly in that House, and by members of the engineering profession, that until they opened out better prospects, as regarded pay and status, to these skilled artificers they would never succeed in inducing men to throw up the freedom of private employment and subject themselves to the discipline of the Royal Navy. Take the engine room artificers alone. The Government proposed to add 265 engine room artificers this year. But if rumour could be trusted they were already 100 short of these men, and they could not get them. It was true the Admiralty had made one step in advance in giving these men warrant rank; but he was afraid even that concession would not enable them to keep pace with their engineering requirements. The hon. Member for Gateshead had pointed out that these men expected to have a prospect opened to them of becoming engineer officers. Why should they not? ["Hear, hear!"] They possessed all the qualifications necessary; they were taken on for temporary service in that capacity, and they were entitled to the rank, not alone by their qualifications but by the nature of the responsibilities that they undertook. These men were frequently in sole control of small ships. [The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY, dissented]. They are competent to be in charge and they are in charge of the machinery of gunboats up to two thousand horse power. At all events they were always in charge of the machinery of torpedo boats, there was no engineer on board at all. They were the engineers, of torpedo boats and by the Admiralty Order when they were so in charge they were styled chief engineers, so that the Admiralty took advantage of these men's qualifications but would only give them temporary rank as chief engineers although on ordinary occasions they were regarded merely as artisans. Therefore he said again if they wanted their engineering force to be brought to the point which the country expected, they would have to open up a better avenue and prospect of promotion to the men. ["Hear, hear!"] The same necessity existed with regard to naval shipwrights. There had been questions put in the House with reference to the menial duties these man were called upon to perform and the replies received were very unsatisfactory. The Secretary to the Admiralty said among other things that it was not considered either necessary or desirable to treat shipwrights in any exceptional manner. ["Hear, hear!"] These men were not asking to be treated in an exceptional manner. ["Hear, hear!"] They asked to be treated on the same footing as men of similar trades were treated when they joined the Navy. In Government establishments shipwrights and fitters passed the same Civil Service examination, but when they entered the Navy the shipwright entered as a leading seaman and was subjected to work derogatory to his status as a first-class mechanic. He had to mess with the ordinary seamen and stokers, to clean the mess, to cook the mess and so on. These were not the occupations of a skilled mechanic, and the reason the Admiralty could not get these men was because there was a general boycott against the Navy throughout the whole country. ["Hear, hear!"] There was a general boycott against the Admiralty by the Trade Unions of the country and there was hardly a shipwright who would enter their service until the rating was improved. ["Hear, hear!"] He told the House this plainly. He had no personal interest in it, but he was perfectly certain that the demand of these men was a fair one. Why should not the shipwrights in Government yards rank precisely the same as the fitters? He was admitted to be a skilled workman, but when he entered the naval service he was given an inferior rating which he would not continue to accept. During the last six months the Government had been doing its utmost to induce 100 men to enter their service, with the result that they had only got two or perhaps three; and he was convinced they would never get the men they required until they improved their rating and status. With regard to the stokers, that had always been the weakest branch of the service and would remain the weakest so long as the Admiralty treated the men as they were treated now. They were now proposing to add two thousand more stokers. He had not the least doubt they would get the number but what about the quality?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY said when he visited the dockyard he had himself inspected the stokers and was struck with their remarkably good physique.

MR. KEARLEY said this was a very old standing joke in the naval yards. When the First Lord came round these men were specially prepared and selected for his inspection. [*Laughter.*] The Secretary to the Admiralty in the late Administration used to make the same statement that these stokers were men of remarkable physique. Of course, when he went to the dockyard they got a collection ready for him as they got a collection ready for the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY said that could not have been the case, because he stopped the men as they were going home to dinner and had them drawn up.

MR. KEARLEY: Then you must have accidentally hit upon a very good collection. [*Laughter.*] For his own part, continued the hon. Member, he went for three weeks with the naval manœuvres, and the engineers frequently spoke to him of the weakness of this branch of the service—the young stokers of poor physique who would not be able to bear the strain of stoking for a long period of fast steaming, which would often be necessary in time of war. These men got 1s. 8d. per day. How could they expect to get good men of high physique to leave the plough even to enter the Navy for 1s. 8d. a day? More than that, these men were denied privileges which were given to the seamen in the way of inducements to re-engage and many other things. If the Government wanted to get the best material available, they must be prepared to treat the men well and give them opportunities of improving their status. [*Cheers.*]

*MR. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.) said it appeared to him that the Government had made an important step in advance with regard to the material and *personnel* of the Fleet. But it required 99,232 men to man the Fleet, and the increase of 6,000 would bring up the number of men in the Fleet nominally to 100,000 men; but in reality there were only about 80,000 men ready to man the Fleet. He thought it was necessary to consider the question on a broader basis. The only way to find the necessary number of men for the Fleet was to have an adequate and large reserve of sailors. Last year, when they asked questions on the subject, the First Lord rather poohpoohed the subject, and when the Municipality of Liverpool approached him he rather told them to mind their own business, but he had since considered the question, and he now made a step which was to some extent an important step in advance. The present proposal in regard to men who had served 10 or 12 years continuously in the Navy, and were discharged with a good character, would no doubt act as an inducement. Of the men who left the Fleet in 1895-6, there were no less than 6,028. Of those, only 1,372 were pensioned. Considering that they had 5,000 or 6,000 men every year leaving the service, who did not join the Reserve, it seemed to him that there must be a great leakage, and it was very desirable that they should in every possible way guard against this. He would suggest that the Admiralty should offer further inducements, besides giving this deferred pension at the age of 60. A very large number of men left the Fleet after ten years' service without pensions, and to such men a small bounty of £1 or £2 a year might be given if they would promise to remain in the Reserve. The present mode with regard to the Reserve was not sufficiently elastic. His hon. Friend opposite would be aware that the French Fleet was very largely manned by Breton and Norman sailors, and he believed we should be wise by adopting a somewhat similar course. What could be easier or more satisfactory than to recruit from 2,000 to 5,000 men as a Reserve from Canada, in which colony and in Newfoundland there was a hardy race of sailors and fishermen. The same principle might be extended to Cape Colony, and from time to time a short training might be given to the men so recruited. The same might be done with the Australian Colonies, and in this way they could easily raise a force of from 8,000 to 10,000 useful and efficient sailors to assist us in manning the Fleet in time of emergency. Moreover, in India, among the coolie boys, there were men who would be able to act as a reserve of firemen in the Fleet in case of necessity. Another way by which they might add to the Reserve of the seamen for the Fleet would be by giving some encouragement to shipowners to have on board their ships a sufficient and adequate number of British sailors and seamen. It would be a very serious thing for us in time of war if our Mercantile Marine was so largely manned by foreigners as it was at the present time. There was no part of the

Empire that would suffer so much if its food supply were cut off, than would London; and as London was to a large extent dependent for its food supply on foreign countries, he thought that he, as a London Member, was justified in calling attention to the matter. It would be a good thing if there were more training ships, so that more boys might be trained for the Navy after they left the Board Schools. It was certainly the fact that we could build our ships more cheaply and more quickly than could the foreigner. He inclined to the opinion that they could combine the two systems of long and short service. He pointed out that while the total sum which was spent on the Reserve of the Navy amounted to the very inconsiderable sum of £230,000, we spent on the Reserve of the Army very nearly two millions a year—including the militia, yeomanry, volunteers, and first and second class Army Reserve. He thought the Admiralty had taken a small step in the forward direction, and perhaps they would still further increase the number of the men as years went on.

On the return of Mr. SPEAKER, after the usual interval,

MR. J. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesbrough) said that he spoke not as a naval expert, but as one having some knowledge of seafaring men. The First Lord of the Admiralty regretted that it was impossible to get men enough for the Navy and the Reserve; and he knew men who had served 10 and 20 years in the Navy and were only too anxious to leave it. When a seaman joined the Navy he had the idea that the Admiralty would provide him with food and clothing; but once on board, he found that these promises were not carried out. The present scale of provisions, which had been in force for 30 or 40 years was insufficient, and a large amount of the seaman's wages had to be spent in food. The seaman was provided with a pint of cocoa, a pound of biscuits, 1¼lb. of salt meat, and a pint of tea a day, with half-a-pound of flour three times a week. Then as to uniform, when a man joined a ship his kit was examined, and generally found unsatisfactory according to the ideas of the Commander, with the result that a new outfit had to be purchased out of the man's wages. Then, when he joined another ship, the new Commander's ideas would be different, and that would involve another outfit. If the Admiralty dealt more liberally with the men in respect of food and clothing, they would stop longer in the service. The First Lord was mistaken in supposing that there would be little difficulty in calling up the men in the Reserve, who would be scattered all over the world. When war was declared the wages of seamen would go up, and men serving in American vessels on the American coast would have a reluctance to respond to the call of the Admiralty. Too long the British seamen in the Mercantile Marine had been allowed to decrease in numbers. At present, out of a total of 240,000 men employed in the Mercantile Marine, including fishermen, only 40,000 were of British birth. The right hon. Member for the Ormskirk Division had said the reason was that the British sailor was a drunkard, and untrustworthy. That was not true. The British sailor was a sober, intelligent, and hardworking man, and would compare with any other class of working men in the country. In the Donald Currie line the foreigners employed were not one per cent.; in the White Star, the Cunard, and the Union lines the same conditions obtained; and these companies got the pick of the British sailors, because they paid proper wages and gave good treatment. It was true that when men were signed on in an English port, the shipowner paid the same wages to the British seaman and the foreigner. But the foreigners were employed to cut down wages, and many crews were signed on in Continental ports where the wages were often 10s., 15s., and 20s. a month less than in England. The reason why shipowners employed foreigners was that they could get them at a cheaper rate of wages. Then there were close on 30,000 Lascars employed on ships belonging to the United Kingdom. They were told that these Lascars were British seamen, but would the First Lord employ them on warships? He was glad to notice that some change had been made in the conditions of enrolment for foreign service, though he thought it would be found that in one or two instances dissatisfaction would be felt in connection with it. He noticed that it was intended to dispense with the two present ratings in the Reserve.

First-class men were supposed to be seamen with five years' service and upwards in the merchant service, and the second-class were fishermen and ordinary seamen, with at least two years' sea service. But now, the first-class seaman was to be in practically the same rating as the ordinary seaman, and he would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he thought he would get any large number of men, who considered themselves qualified merchant seamen, to join the Reserve as ordinary seamen in the same rating as men with one or two years' service? He quite approved, however, of the proposed six months' training on board a naval ship. He also noticed a very good change, and that was that the men who had served 10 or 12 years' in the Royal Navy were to be allowed to join the Reserve, and after 20 years' service in all were to be entitled to a pension. But the pension, he thought, was too small, and did not begin till the age of 60. The trouble with merchant seamen was to live to the age of 60, and, therefore, very few would receive any benefit from this. He would like to see the Lords of the Admiralty a little more generous, increase the pension to £20 a year, and reduce the age to 45 or 50. If that were done he believed a larger number of men would remain in the Navy. He was told a very large number of men deserted from our warships when in American ports, and that in 1893, when a warship was lying in an American port over 100 men deserted from her in one night. They did so because they got better wages and better treatment in the American Navy. He thought the Admiralty might well afford a little better food. If a man was required to fight he must be well fed and well paid. The Government paid every year to the P. and O. Company a large sum for subsidised cruisers, yet the company were allowed to carry Lascars, even in transports, while there were plenty of Reserve men in want of employment, and they ought to have the preference, at least, on transports.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) agreed that the age at which pensions became payable ought to be reduced. He believed a man coming into the Reserve was better pleased with the prospect of a smaller pension at the age of 50 than of a larger one at the age of 60. This question was of much greater importance now than it was last year, because the right hon. Gentleman was going to try to get something more out of the Naval Reserve. The right hon. Gentleman was going to try to get the Naval Reserve Men to serve on board ships. That was a step of which he approved; but if it was to succeed they must give the men some extra inducement. Therefore he thought the time had arrived when they should give these men their pension at 50, making it, if necessary, somewhat smaller than now. As regards the food, he could not agree with the hon. Member. He did not believe the wide world afforded such good food as the Admiralty supplied to the sailors in the Navy. He was acquainted with all sorts of food and cookery, and he knew nothing to equal the ship's biscuit and the ship's cocoa. There was nothing that he himself ate with so much pleasure. The sailor "took up savings," as it was called, for a large portion of his food, with which he provided himself with the leg of pork and the rabbit pie which he so loved. Judging from appearance, he would say that the sailor was over, rather than under, fed. With regard to the fanciful changes in uniform sometimes insisted on, he agreed that when a man had got his rig it was rather hard that it should have to be remade because a particular captain did not agree with the cut of the cap.

CAPTAIN BETHELL: That is long since done away with.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES said he believed the grievance existed still. The hon. Member for Dundee had complained that the Estimates had been delayed, and then made a speech, no part of which touched any one of the Estimates at all. The hon. Member did indeed promise that when he came to the Vote for the new yacht he would vote against the Sovereign of the greatest maritime country in the world having a yacht to go to sea in. He did not think the hon. Member would find many Members to follow him. With regard to the question of Crete, on which the hon. Member touched, he would only say that he was surprised to find him reproach the First Lord with having undertaken the defence of the British Admirals, who were under the orders of the Admiralty. When the Admirals were attacked, as one was the other day when his word was questioned, and that of a correspondent at Athens preferred, he thought the First Lord would be wanting in his duty if he did not take up their defence. He could only suppose the hon. Member for Dundee did not mean to undertake anybody's defence, unless, perhaps, the defence of those 100 Members who thought it becoming to send a telegram to Greece recommending resistance to the Concert, and to Her Majesty's ships as part of the Concert? Coming to the main subject of the Debate, he complained that the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean and the school of which he was, if not the founder, at any rate one of the ornaments, invariably assumed that in the next war we should have against us a great combination of the Powers of Europe—France, Germany, and Russia. He did not believe it. He could not conceive any combination which, in the present or any probable aspect of politics, would include France and Germany against England. Germany would have to give back Alsace and Lorraine before that could happen. Another fallacious assumption was that the war was certain to break out without any warning at all. He believed it was impossible in the nature of things that fleets could be prepared, political combinations brought together, and political strategy carried out without our becoming aware of it, and having adequate and fair time to prepare ourselves for eventualities. Therefore, these two assumptions could not be entertained. What they had to prepare for was, at the outside, a combination of two Powers. The right hon. Baronet compared ships; but they could not compare ship for ship, or ton for ton, as between two nations. The whole value of a ship depended upon the men in her, the training they had got, and even above and beyond that, upon the naval system of which the ship was a part. Unless these things were taken into account, and much else besides—the capacity of manœuvring at a short distance, the power of serving your guns with ammunition, the very speed at which your turret or barbette revolved, the amount of time you were at sea—they could not reduce ships to what he might call a common denominator, so as to make any fair comparison between them. In these respects and in many others, the British Fleet stood prominent. It was said that this country was not building ships at the present time. As a matter of policy we should build, not as quickly as we could, but as slowly as we could. We could build a battleship or a cruiser faster than any other Power. The improvements in marine machinery, in armour plating, and in all that went to make up a good man-of-war were increasing enormously day by day, and consequently the longer we postponed building our ships, so long as we got them in time, the better a ship we should get. And we could afford to postpone the ship longer than other countries, because we could build it quicker. The right hon. Gentleman, in dealing with the number of men, said that there were 36 per cent. of foreigners in the Mercantile Marine, and the right hon. Baronet told the House that there were only 40,000 British seamen in the Mercantile Marine. [Several HON. MEMBERS: "Able-bodied."] In the Return of the Board of Trade, dated April 1896, he found that the total number of persons employed in the sailing and steam vessels registered under Part I. belonging to the United Kingdom, the Isle of Man, and the Channel Islands, excluding vessels employed on rivers and inland navigation and yachts, was 240,486 persons. Of those 32,335 were foreigners. [Sir C. DILKE: "Stewardesses," *and laughter.*] The right hon. Baronet voted for Female Suffrage, and yet he wanted the House to believe that the stewardesses were not British subjects. [*Laughter, and* "They are not seamen."] There were also 28,077 Lascars who were British subjects. In addition to this the Return gave the number of fishermen and boys resident within the limits of the port as 73,090; persons other than regular fishermen occasionally employed in fishing, 41,230; total, 114,320. If they added the fishermen to the merchantmen there was a total of 354,000 persons, and the percentage of foreigners was not 36 per cent., but only 9 per cent. The Board of Trade Returns, moreover, excluded a large number of seafaring persons; they only took note of one crew, they excluded yachts and the beachmen—some of the best seamen in the world, and they excluded all those employed on inland rivers and navigation. If, therefore, they made a very moderate allowance for those thus excluded, the grand total of seafaring, water-going, web-footed persons belonging to these islands was close upon half a million. It was very unfair to say that the Reserves had very little training and discipline. The Reserve men were extremely well trained. The right hon. Gentleman compared our Reserves with those of France; but there were only 120,000 men in France all told, and 40,000 of these were men over 40 years of age—an age at which we got rid of a good many of our sailors. Those were men of an average of four years' training; but the training might have been 10 or 15 years ago, so that a certain proportion of these men were seamen in buckram. As to the training of the men, he asserted that 100,000 untrained men were not worth 20,000 trained men for sea service. In his opinion for some years past the Admiralty had been pursuing a mistaken policy. They had been reducing the time of training while increasing the amount of training. It was said that there was a difficulty in finding men for the Navy. There was no difficulty, however, in finding boys, though there was difficulty in finding accommodation for them in the ordinary training-ship. He thought that the training-ships should be doubled, as well as the training brigs, and that the boy, instead of being asked to pass through the brig in six weeks, should be allowed 13, 14, or 20 weeks to learn his duties. The same was true of the Training Squadron. All seamen ought to pass through; and it, as well as the training brigs, ought to be doubled; and even then, when they had done that, they would barely have given the men the training they ought to have in order to make them useful seamen in the Navy. In regard to the training of officers, he contended that the Admiralty had done wrong to give up the *Britannia*, and especially that a great mistake had been made in raising the age. Considering all that a boy had to learn and do before he came to the rank of lieutenant, they ought rather to have lowered the age. It was said that this was done in order to get boys from the public schools; but, in his opinion, boys from public schools were of no use in the Navy. At the public schools boys got accustomed to luxury, and they were not at all inclined to sleep on a hammock over a chest, and to live for eight or nine years without any kind of privacy—living, sleeping, and dressing in public. This raising of the age, too, gave the crammer another year in which to do his work, mostly mischievous. Finally, with regard to Greenwich. At Greenwich he believed the Navy possessed the most complete and admirable educational establishment that the world knows, not even excepting Oxford or Cambridge, or any foreign university; yet the important course for sub-lieutenants at Greenwich, which had been eight or nine months, was now cut down to two, which was nothing less than absurd. He hoped the First Lord would give attention to the mistakes in training to which he had called attention. He apologised to the Committee for detaining them so long, and he could only plead that the extreme interest he took in the Navy, and above all, in the training of the men, had induced him to make these remarks.

SIR JOHN BAKER (Portsmouth) joined in the expressions of esteem for the First Lord of the Admiralty, and in acknowledgement of the services he had rendered to the country in relation to the Navy, and not only now, but so far back as 20 or 25 years ago, when he was at the head of the Naval Administration. With regard to the present naval policy, however, he could not but think that the proposed discharge of 1,500 or 1,600 men was a great mistake, and was a very odd way of encouraging men to come into Governnent employment. He would mention one thing, and that was the excessive amount of overtime in the dockyards. At the present moment the Admiralty were working their hands at overtime to the extent of eight or nine days in each week. That was the case at Portsmouth Dockyard, and he could tell the right hon. Gentleman that the men did not at all approve of that method of employment. It was contrary to the practice of the best employers throughout the kingdom. The Government should be an example to the employers. This was the result of want of forethought and foresight on the part of the

Admiralty, and it had the effect of keeping a large number of men out of employment. ["Hear, hear!"] The thing was done for the purpose of balancing the accounts near the end of the year, or spending the money within the year. This system delayed rather than hastened the building of ships, and the result of it was in Portsmouth to keep some 500 men out of employment who had been attracted to Portsmouth in search of employment, many of them brought there at the invitation of the Government itself. This was the first discharge of hands in the dockyards that had been proposed for some years past, and he hoped that it would be the last. ["Hear, hear!"] Then, as to another matter of great importance, the Admiralty ought to increase the number of training vessels, because, now the Mercantile Marine had decided to do away with the apprentice system; and therefore it was the duty of the Government to provide training ships for the youths of the country who had an inclination for the sea, and so provide the ships of the Navy with well-trained seamen. Then there was another matter he wished to call attention to, and that was the treatment of petty officers, who were, he contended, entitled to the honours and advantages so widely bestowed upon men of the same rank in the Army and the Marine forces. They were most valuable servants of the Crown. Their claims had been pressed upon successful Administrations, but with no satisfactory result. He knew of what he was speaking, because they had in his constituency some 8,000 of these petty officers, more or less identified with the port; he knew their views, and he could say that they were grievously dissatisfied and discontented. All he asked for them was that they should be put, in regard to pay and pension, upon the same scale as like officers in the Army and the Marines. They claimed that their training and their services entitled them to like treatment. They were the backbone of the Service, and although during the last three or four years their case had been brought before Parliament, nothing had yet been done to improve their condition. He believed that if the First Lord of the Admiralty gave their case his careful consideration he would do what he could to remove the discontent which existed among this valuable section of the Service. Then as to the stokers in the Navy, their case was a very bad one. They had gone over the country touting for men to become stokers in the Navy. The right hon. Gentleman shook his head, but the statement was nevertheless true. They were brought from the Midlands, because they could not find men to act as stokers at the naval ports, and what was the reason? The main reason was that they did not encourage a high class of men into the Service. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman was not aware of the difference between the pay of a stoker and of a seaman. A chief leading stoker in the Navy in 1865 received 2s. 5d. a day, and to-day he only received 2s. 6d. There had been no gradual promotion and encouragement in that branch of the service during all these years, notwithstanding that in that time they had had a large number of important, delicate and responsible duties put upon them. That was the secret of the dislike the men had to enter the service. They would get good men, who would put themselves to the training for the regular employment which was afforded, if the Admiralty only gave encouragement to them. Then another grievance was that they did not get the additional 2d. per day on re-engaging after ten years. Why should a seamen receive the 2d. and not the stoker, who, after ten years' service, had become an essential portion of the crew of a vessel. They were refused, too, the 3d. a day granted to deck petty officers after four years' rating. These were all differences which had existed year after year, and which tended unquestionably to the discredit of the Navy in the eyes of men who would otherwise be glad to enter it. It was the method and the system which the Government persisted in following in regard to this class of public servants that brought about the whole difference. He appealed to the First Lord that he would give his best consideration to these claims, and distinguish this year from all other years by showering benefits upon two very deserving classes of men.

MARINE GARRISON IN NAVAL BASES.

SIR JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth) rose to call attention to the training and organisation of the Navy in relation to the use and application of Marine forces, and to move :—

> "That it is desirable to place such Royal Marine forces (artillery and infantry) at the naval bases and defended coaling ports abroad as are required for the general service of the naval stations, thereby relieving a corresponding number of Royal Artillery and Line now quartered at those places."

He said this seemed a very simple Resolution, but it really raised the whole question of the principles of Imperial defence. The subject might be approached from three points of view—that of general policy, that of naval necessity, and that of military expediency. The general policy was founded, and must be founded, upon the freedom of their Fleet, the security of their bases, and the mobility of their Army. The Motion distinctly dealt with naval bases, and the present position was that the Admiralty washed its hands of all responsibility with regard to the defence of the bases of the Fleet. [*Cries of* "No!"] He should be very glad if it could be shown that that was not the present policy. He thought the First Lord would agree with him in this proposition—that the defence of naval bases must be independent of the direct defence by the sea-going fleets or squadrons. That being agreed, they came to the question of the local defence of these bases, which was entirely treated now as a purely military question. Upon this point he would advance another proposition which he thought his right hon. Friend would not deny—namely, that whereas formerly, and even until recently, the defence of a port or maritime position might be considered a purely military matter, now every day and every hour, the development of naval warfare was making the defence more and more aquatic. His right hon. Friend did not deny that.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: Silence does not give consent.

SIR J. COLOMB said in that case he would read what the present Secretary of State for India said when he was First Lord of the Admiralty. Speaking in that House on the 2nd of March 1891, as head of the Admiralty, he said—

> "As science develops and the range of guns increased the passive defence of the stations becomes more and more an aquatic defence."

Therefore, at all events, he had the authority of a former First Lord that his proposition was right. The days were gone by, under modern conditions of warfare, when fleets attempted to attack forts. The torpedo and the insidious night attacks of small craft of the torpedo class necessitated the defence of ports being more and more aquatic than it ever was before. That being so it was quite evident that they could not ignore naval considerations in the defence of ports. The utility and value of the port was for them the security of free ingress and egress for their ships, and although the defence of the port must not and ought not directly to depend on the operations of the sea-going fleet, they could not adequately or really defend the port in its true sense unless they kept the offing clear. The defence of a naval base involved not merely the defence of the mouth of the port, for in order to preserve the utility of the port, naval means were required to keep as large an area as possible round that port clear. What was the value of a coaling station if only the local defence of the port was provided for, and a hostile force in the offing out of the range of your guns was capturing your colliers preventing coal supplies coming into port? Without labouring the point, it could not be denied that the defence of a port in its local interests was becoming more and more aquatic, and you could not get rid of naval responsibility for keeping the offing clear. The effect of this was apparent in the Army Estimates, they were becoming more and more aquatic in character. This involved duplex arrangements and all the inconveniences of dual control and dual administration. What was the object and reason for having these ports defended on naval stations? That the Fleet might find there supplies necessary for its maintenance? And who was responsible for getting the supplies there? The Fleet. It was a naval responsibility, and yet it was treated as a military question, in which the War Office was concerned. For the oversea supplies of the garrisons from home the Navy was responsible, and yet the cost was borne on the Army Estimates. Look at the effect of this policy under the head of military expediency. He would not go into it at length, for that would be irregular, but to show the effect he took the great ocean area called the North American and West Indies Station. The Admiralty rightly said that in this great area of the Atlantic the bases at Bermuda, Halifax, St. Lucia, and Jamaica must be protected, and what was the consequence of looking at this as a military question? There was one battalion at Bermuda, and, owing to naval necessities, this was separated into two parts, thirteen miles apart. It was best explained by following a battalion in its tour of service round the station. It was moved to Halifax and then separated nine miles apart. It then proceeded from Halifax to the West Indies and when it got there it was again broken up into fragments, three-eighths being at Jamaica and five-eighths distributed between Barbadoes and St. Lucia, hundreds of miles, and in one instance a thousand miles separating them. This was due to treating the defence of naval bases as a military question. When the stress of war came and a field force required, the condition of this force was that the officers had never had a chance of exercising their men in a battalion, it was monstrous, there was no other word for it. The Admiralty, it was said, were not responsible, but the taxpayers had not separate naval and military pockets, and in the interests of the taxpayers the expensive and inefficient system should be put an end to. The total regular military force distributed among the North American bases, including artillery and engineers, did not in the aggregate amount to more than the equivalent of 35 companies. There were, he knew, the equivalent of 14 companies of colonial forces. The army being adapted not for this work, but organised in a different way, when it was broken up into detachments the staff was enormous. For these 35 companies there were two Lieutenant-Generals—one was Governor of Bermuda, and came into the Colonial Vote, two Brigadier-Generals, one Colonel, one Assistant Adjutant-General, two Military Secretaries, eight Deputy Assistant Adjutant-Generals, two Military Secretaries, two Aides-de-camp, one Staff-Captain; then there was the Medical Staff, the Ordnance Corps, and the Pay Departments. In the simple question of hospitals these four naval bases involved a charge for medical officers and army surgeons and subordinates of £12,000 a year, and in the Navy Estimates the charge for naval surgeons at these places was £6,000. By duplication they found that the money of the taxpayer was running away. Why? Because they insisted upon keeping up a system which was obsolete. The total cost of the staff for the equivalent of 35 companies of regular troops was £31,000. ["Hear, hear."] The country had been more or less agitated lately owing to the proposal of the War Office to try a new experiment with the flower of our infantry. Why was the experiment being made? To meet the naval demands. What was the Admiralty doing? There was the equivalent of two battalions of Marine Infantry in squads in empty ships at Plymouth, Portsmouth, and Chatham. They were deteriorating day by day. What was the duty of the men? It was principally to pull ashore the warrant officers who commanded the ships when they wanted to visit their wives and families. When they were not so engaged they were housemaiding the ships—polishing, blackleading, and whitewashing—or shifting naval stores about the dockyards. Why, when the War Office were experimenting with the Guards, should the Admiralty be deteriorating the Guards' rivals, the Marine Infantry, by treating them in this way? The standing Navy of England was a very modern institution; it was only begun to be created in 1853. So recently as 1852 there was a permanent list of naval officers, but there was no continuous service or permanent list of men. The Marines, however, originated so far back as the time of Admiral Blake. The 3rd Buffs and the Guards were the originators of the Marines, and for a hundred years the Navy relied for its nucleus of fighting men and discipline on the Line. Regiments of the Line were regularly embarked because the country neglected its seamen. It was found that the demands of the Navy were breaking up the Army organisation, and so a special force was created, and the special force was the Royal Marine Infantry. The fact was that now that the standing Navy was beginning to work the Admiralty hardly knew what to do with it. Why was it that originally the Navy relied on the Army? Because the country neglected its seamen. It only took seamen in a ship's commission and then turned them adrift. There were three great functions for which the Marine force was created. The first was to maintain the discipline of the ship. The second was that they should by their experience in the handling of arms incite the seamen to imitate them. These two reasons had in a standing Navy disappeared. The third reason which had survived was that it might be a reserve of the Navy and to enable the expansion of the Navy. Indeed he might say there was a fourth function, which was that in Naval operations there should be a mobile military force at the disposal of the admirals to seize and hold positions. That had been always necessary, and it was even more necessary now than it ever had been. He would come to the last ten years. What happened at Alexandria? After the bombardment of Alexandria there were those outrages and burnings which were the origin of the subsequent troubles. Why was that? It was because of the want of such a mobile force as he suggested. In the old days there was a mobile force at the back of the Admiral which was carried in the ships, and could be left at any given point to seize and hold a position, and the ships could then withdraw and the Fleet remained an active fighting force. They could not have this mobile force now carried in ships; there was no room for extra force; and when the force now had to be landed the ships were not complete fighting machines. He would entreat the House to weigh the importance of the meaning of that. Had there been a battalion of Marines at Malta or Gibraltar, the result would have been that after the bombardment of Alexandria part of the mobile force brought by the Admiral from the Marine battalions at Gibraltar and Malta could have been landed, and the whole consequences of that war would have been avoided. In 1884 there was a sudden need for troops at Suakim. The Admiralty telegraphed to Mediterranean Admiral: "Send your Marines on to Suakim." The Marines were sent on to Suakim, and having been withdrawn from the ships, the Mediterranean Fleet was inefficient as a fighting machine. That was a very serious matter. He now came to Crete, and he asked the House to consider the importance of providing this mobile force at stations for being used as the necessity arose. The Marines had been landed at Crete. It might be said that all other ships were doing the same as were their ships, but the fact remained that while these Marines were on shore, our vessels were not absolutely efficient fighting machines. This difficulty arose from the want of a mobile force at head-quarters on the station. Had there been such a Marine force as he had indicated at head-quarters the Admiral could have distributed them as the occasion or the necessity required, but by landing the Marines they had deprived the ships of their full fighting capacity. He would like to grapple at once with an argument the Admiralty would bring forward that if they quartered this Marine force at the naval stations abroad they would then cease to be Marines. He would undertake to say that they could have 4,200 Marine Artillery and Infantry quartered at the naval stations abroad without interfering in the least with their sea-going efficiency. He took the number of 4,200 because there were 4,200 bluejackets in the Coastguard. These men were not under strict discipline of barrack life, they were scattered around their coasts, and they were part of the active Navy. They had a certain amount of drilling on shore to keep them efficient, but their main occupation in remote country districts was bucolic. His argument was that if they could keep 4,200 bluejackets absolutely efficient by quartering them on shore—with a period of ten days' drill and a participation in the autumn manœuvres of the Fleet—why could they not do the same with the Marines on naval stations abroad? What was the objection to such a system as he suggested? It would immediately give them the power of expansion that was desirable, it would be found not to be at all impossible of adoption, it would add to the efficiency of the Navy and Marines, and would certainly add to the efficiency of their armaments. He wanted the Marines to be where their sea service training could be kept up and he would not for one moment wish to dissociate the Marines from the naval service. By carrying out this proposal they would save the enormous charge for the Army Transport Vote. Then he said that the total amount of service abroad must not exceed the service at home. While they were keeping 4,200 bluejackets permanently rooted to the soil, they were keeping their Marines perpetually floating on the sea. If his right hon. Friend looked into it he would find that they were misappreciating what the Marines were for. They were intended to allow of the expansion of the Navy, but they now used them up by keeping them always at sea. Under the present system the whole world outside the channel was relying on the forces at home for their reserves of men. He instanced Hong Kong as a nucleus of power. At Hong Kong there were about 1,600 regular troops, Royal Artillery and Line. There were distributed in the China Fleet some 600 or 700 Marines, artillery and infantry. If 1,800 Marine force were placed on the station, 1,200 on shore and 600 in the Fleet, at the disposal of the Admiral, he could by interchange give every Marine one year at sea and two years on shore, during his three years' service on the China station, all the great cost of Army transport being saved. He argued that such a system as he advocated would be found not to be difficult of adoption, while it would add to the efficiency of the Navy and Marines, and would certainly add to the efficiency of their armaments. ["Hear, hear!"] They were training the Marine Artillery officers at great expense, and the Admiralty would not use them. For 200 years the Marine service had rendered great service. If they looked into it they would find that they were misappreciating what the Marines were for. The Admiralty were making no use of the highly-trained officers—it was only when these officers escaped from Admiralty control they were allowed a career. Major Bor at Crete was a Marine Artillery officer; Captain Oldfield at Dongola was also. When Sir H. Kitchener was advancing to Dongola, who did he ask to support him? He telegraphed home for some Royal Marine Artillery, and he wanted more. Yet these were the men the Admiralty were wasting. There was no bad spirit in the Navy towards the Royal Marines, but it was felt the conditions under which the present system was originated had entirely changed. The Marines had done their duty on every sea for 200 years, and had never failed. He appealed to the First Lord of the Admiralty to use this service for the benefit of the Navy. The Admiralty could not go on pursuing its present policy of suppressing Marine officers without ruining the service which Lord St. Vincent declared was the sheet anchor of England. ["Hear, hear."] The hon. Member concluded by moving his Resolution.

*CAPTAIN PHILLPOTTS (Devon, Torquay) said that the naval bases referred to in the discussion were maintained almost entirely for purpose of securing the efficiency of the Navy, and it was only reasonable, right and proper that the defence of these stations should be undertaken by the Navy. It had been said that if the Naval Commander-in-Chief had control over the garrisons of these ports, he might be tempted to withdraw a portion of them, in order to strengthen his force afloat. He himself could imagine nothing less likely to happen. An Admiral would be courting disaster to his fleet if he lost command of his dockyards and coaling stations. He might disembark men to strengthen the force on shore, but no Admiral would dream of risking the capture of his base of operations by an enemy. It was said that the Marines were too valuable a force to be allotted to the duty proposed by the Resolution. He did not think there was any more important duty than that of securing the safety of the naval bases. It was so important that only picked troops, men who could be thoroughly relied on, ought to be employed. Some hon. Members thought the Marines would lose their distinctive characteristics if employed on shore as proposed. If anything they would increase in efficiency. They would be in constant touch with their comrades of the Fleet, and constantly employed in attending to torpedo defences at the various naval ports. Many of them were accustomed to boat work, and thoroughly adapted to the service proposed in the Resolution. As regarded the officers of the Royal Marines, he could only say that they were worthy of the men they commanded, and no higher praise could be awarded to any body of officers. But it must be and it was most discouraging to the officers of the Royal Marines to know that after going through a most careful and elaborate training there was no opening for them when they got to the senior ranks. There was work for Marine officers until they reached the rank of Lieut.-Colonel, but from that day onwards there was no proper scope for their energies. The adoption of the scheme suggested in the Resolution would remedy that grievance to a great extent, and give those officers whose zeal and ability no one could question a chance of distinguishing themselves in the higher ranks of their profession. This scheme would entail an increase of the Marine force. It was not nearly strong enough at present. At the headquarters at Plymouth there were only 22 men ready for embarkation, there were 300 more re-qualifying after a term of service, and there were 280 recruits. Whether the Resolution was adopted or not, it was absolutely necessary that the Marine force should be largely increased. It could be depended on as a Reserve for the Navy. The Mercantile Marine is unable to supply sufficient men to form an efficient Reserve for the Navy; and though the proposals of the First Lord of the Admiralty would materially improve the efficiency of the Reserves, he contended that it was of the utmost importance that the force of Marines should be largely increased. They would form a very important element in the disciplined force on board every ship that might be mobilised in time of war. A large increase in the number of Marines was absolutely essential, and he would therefore commend the Motion to the attention of the First Lord of the Admiralty.

*GENERAL RUSSELL (Cheltenham) said the question before them should be considered from a military as well as from a naval point of view. He maintained that the present system not only interfered with the efficiency of the Army, but that also as our Army was at present constituted we could not properly defend our coaling stations in the manner in which they should be defended. The present system was a marvellous anomaly. How was it possible for young men to be trained to act efficiently in the field with arms of precision when they were shut up in fortresses for years? The regiments were sometimes divided, and one portion of it was at one station, and the other at another station. There was a regiment at Bermuda which was split up into two portions, and the cost of the staff was upwards of £2,000 a year. Then the Liverpool regiment was distributed between Barbadoes and Jamaica, there being five companies at Barbadoes, and three at Jamaica. How could the colonel be responsible for the efficiency of these men? In order to keep up this regiment there was a staff which cost £5,000 a year. An even worse case was that of the Leicester regiment, part of which was at the Cape, and part at St. Helena. How could the commanding officer be responsible for the efficiency of that regiment? Was he to command them by cable? These boys were only half-trained before they were sent out, and how could they acquire efficiency when they were out there? At Hong Kong there was another battalion the staff of which cost nearly £4,000 a year, and at Singapore, purely a coaling station, there was another battalion in the same condition. Could anything more damaging to the efficiency of the Army be imagined? It was a ruinous system for the Army, and a ruinous system for the coaling stations. He would further point out that the difficulty associated with the linked battalion system, namely that of keeping up the strength of the battalion at home to correspond with the strength of the battalion abroad, would be removed if the defence of the coaling stations were given over to the Admiralty. The Government were about to make an experiment with the Guards. He confessed that the speech of the Under Secretary for War in support of that experiment, able though it was, had not convinced him in the least. [*Laughter.*] But the House decided to try the experiment. The duty of the three years' Guardsmen at Gibraltar would be to man the guns of the fortress, and the guns nowadays were not like the guns of years' ago into which it was only necessary to ram a bag of powder and some shots.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The remarks of the hon. Gentleman are hardly pertinent to the question, which is whether it is desirable to remove the duty of protecting coaling stations from the military to the Marines.

*GENERAL RUSSELL said his point was that young soldiers could not have the experience necessary for the manning of the guns of those fortresses, while the Marines, on account of their long services were well fitted for the work. The present Government had done great things for the Army and he hoped they would complete their good work by transferring from the military to the Marines the duty of garrisoning the coaling stations.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.) said that the reform proposed in the Resolution was one which he had advocated for years both inside and outside the House. He was sanguine enough to believe that its adoption was not far off, for experience had taught him that when it was officially said that a thing ought not to be done and could not be done, it was very soon carried out. ["Hear, hear."] He remembered having heard it stated from the Treasury Bench that the Admiralty could not and should not make their guns or their gun carriages; but it was decided not long after that they should manufacture both. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stirling Burghs was a welcomed reinforcement to the ranks of those who supported this reform. He believed that the Secretary of State for India was also an advocate of the change. But, greatly as he welcomed the support of those right hon. Gentlemen, he based his advocacy of the reform on the plain ground of common sense. The Royal Marines were a body of 16,000 men, but the Board of Admiralty was exclusively composed of naval men. There was not one single representative of those 15,000 men upon the Board of Admiralty. Of course, they could not put out of sight the fact that there was a very natural desire on the part of the Admiralty not to overburden the already large Estimates. But, as had been already pointed out by his hon. Friend, it was the taxpayers of the country upon whom the burden of the Estimates must fall, and it was a mistake to allow the two Services who ought to work together to become rivals. It certainly was opposed to common sense that the present arrangements with regard to the Royal Marines should be allowed to continue. The case was very different in foreign countries. In France, for instance, the Infantry of Marines were charged with the defence of the fortresses of the seaports. He should like to know whether the Royal Marines were to perform that duty in this country; what encouragement was given to the officers of the Royal Marines? Did the House know how many of the officers of the Royal Marines held the position of General; why there was only one officer of the Royal Marines who had attained to that post, and he had been relegated to a desk at Whitehall. What was the use of offering to these men a career which was limited by a seat at a desk in Whitehall? What inducement did they hold out to such officers to make themselves capable of taking higher rank? It was not at all surprising that some of these officers should not have taken the necessary steps to qualify themselves for higher positions. He should like hon. Members to go on board of some of Her Majesty's ships in order to see what the Royal Marines were doing on them. They would find that they were literally doing nothing, and that they were practically mere idlers on board. That was the sort of prospect that was held out to these men. It had been very properly remarked in the course of this Debate that some sort of a career ought to be open to the officers of the Royal Marines that would give them an opportunity of benefiting themselves, the nation, and the service. He did not attach much importance to the suggestion that the Royal Marines should become mobile garrisons, either at home or abroad. By putting the Marines to garrison the outlying stations the transport service would be got rid of. A battalion of infantry must be relieved as a whole, and when it went, the whole tradition of the defence of the fortress went with it. But if the Marines were in garrison, the admiral on the station would simply make regular exchanges, and the routine of the garrison would not be interfered with, while the working efficiency of the fleet would be improved. All these reasons were so overwhelming that in the long run they were bound to prevail. He asked the House to become the advocates in this matter, because the Royal Marines had no advocates in the official world. The right hon. Gentleman would say that anything the Marines desired was always carefully considered by the Admiralty. That was so, but they had no representatives in positions of power and responsibility at the Admiralty. He hoped the House would pay attention to the speech of the hon. and gallant Gentleman who preceded him. It was the speech of a soldier of great experience, who, after careful consideration, supported in every particular the claim made by the hon. and gallant Member for Yarmouth. Though they might not get far towards this reform that night, yet he hoped that in the near future they would see it completed, as every other reform to which the authorities had opposed a simple *non possumus* had been completed. ["Hear, hear!"]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY said it was not true to say that the Marines had no advocates. As First Lord of the Admiralty he represented them quite as much as the naval officers. The Marines had, in fact, advocates on all sides; for the Navy could best produce them and the Army desired to have them. What the Army desired was that the Marines should perform those duties which were now performed in part by the Army, and that the Marines would perform them infinitely better; on the other hand, he would venture to put forward the consideration that if this movement was carried to its end it would remove a great part of the value of the Marines. The matter had been treated from two points of view—one, that of finding a career for Marine officers by opening up work for them; and the other was the broader question, from the Imperial point of view, of whether the handing over of coaling stations which were strategic points to the Admiralty would really strengthen our position in the hour of need. There was one argument which somewhat amused him, and that was the enormous cost which was involved now by the occupation by the Army of Bermuda and Hong-Kong and other places. A picture was drawn of the unnecessary expenditure on a large number of superfluous officers, and it was shown that Bermuda could not be garrisoned by soldiers without incurring an enormous expense for a staff. All he could say was that, if that were so, the War Office ought to look to it to reduce that unnecessary expenditure. ["Hear, hear!" *and laughter.*] If the value of the Marines to the Navy were diminished, as it would be, by the transfer, then he thought it better that the necessary reform in military organisation should be undertaken than that a blow should be struck at the Marines. It had been said from the broader point of view that they ought to undertake the defence of the naval bases because they were mainly intended for the naval service; but they were not intended specially for the naval service, but for Imperial service. They were part of our Imperial defences, and it would be incorrect to say that it was strictly from the naval point of view that some of the stations which had been alluded to ought to be defended. There were also places in which the Mercantile Marine were interested — strategic points of the Empire from a military as well as a naval point of view. It had been pointed out that in France and in Germany this system existed, and that there the forts and naval bases were held by the Navy and not by the Army; and it was said that we should follow the same system by placing coaling stations and forts in the hands of the Navy. But the House would readily see that the position was totally different, because the Navy was our first line of defence. We were, if he might use the phrase, on the opposite tack. We required to keep the Navy as free as possible for the enormous task that would be thrown upon it in time of war. At all events, whatever happened, the matter would not be ripe for a long series of years. ["Hear, hear!"] The question would have to be started, so to speak, from the beginning—["hear, hear!"]—and not only would the question have to be treated in that way, but there would be required a body of Naval Engineers as well as Marine Artillery.

Sir J. COLOMB reminded the right hon. Gentleman that the Marine officers went through a torpedo course and submarine mining.

The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY said he was not thinking of these, but of the science of constructing fortifications and those duties which were performed by the Royal Engineers. But he would not press the point. He had only touched some of the difficulties the Admiralty might find in undertaking the work. In time of war the Admiralty and the whole of its organisation would have their hands so full that he wondered whether it was wise to place upon them the additional work of having to look after fortresses, and to consult the War Office on a number of points, crowding duties upon them, when already their work would strain their powers to the utmost. At the bottom of this movement they found the desire on the part of the Army to get rid of some disagreeable duties. ["No, no!"] He had seen proposals from the War Office that Sierra Leone, St. Helena, and Bermuda, should be given to the Admiralty. [An hon. Member: "And Gibraltar."] Gibraltar was a new offer, made only since the Guards were to be sent there. A new force was given to the movement because the Guards were now on the side of the Marines, being used for military duties. Military men have pointed out that the training that could be given in these stations was inadequate, and that the men would deteriorate. But the Admiralty did not wish the Marines to deteriorate, or to be locked up in places where there were not proper ranges, and where they could not be properly exercised with arms of precision. They did not wish to remove them from their proper duties, which they considered to be with the Navy. The present position of affairs was that the Marines were an invaluable adjunct to the Navy, to whom they attached the greatest importance, because they could fight on sea as well as on land. They were invited by the Amendment to put men who could perform two duties into places where men were only required to perform one. An hon. Member said the Marines need not give up their usual training; but at present, looking to the proportion which the Marines bore to the ships to be put into commission, they did not find that they could give the Marines any greater training than they required. If effect were given to the plan now recommended they would have to increase the Marines from 16,000 to 26,000; and if the present number were only able to get an adequate training, how would they be able to train the increased number properly? The Admiralty attached the greatest importance to the Marines as an integral portion of the naval forces, and it was because any movement by which they would be made more like a colonial corps would diminish in their judgment their value for the Navy, that they were opposed to such a gigantic change as that which would be involved in the proposal of the hon. and gallant Member. He felt that the speech of the hon. Member was so important that a full answer ought to be given to it; but he had endeavoured to answer some of the points and to invite the attention of the House to the risks of the changes proposed. He was sure that when hon. Members heard the other side, some points of which he had endeavoured to indicate, the House would hesitate to make a change which, in the opinion of the immense majority of the naval service, would cripple our action in time of war to a degree which would be most inexpedient and contrary to our interests. He appealed to the House to allow the Speaker to leave the Chair now, so that on Friday the House might resume the discussion of the Estimates with the Chairman in the Chair. There would be ample opportunity to raise any point then in connection with the general administration.

Mr. KEARLEY thought that the point was too important to be disposed of so summarily. He noticed that the right hon. Gentleman did not treat of those inequalities from which the officers suffered, but confined his remarks to that part of the Amendment which dealt with the question of the Marines holding the naval bases. The question of the treatment of the Marines by the Admiralty was of the utmost importance. At the present time they represented one-fourth of the fighting strength of the Navy, and yet, in consequence of being sometimes under the Army and sometimes under the Navy, they stood in the position of being under two stools, with all the inconveniences and disabilities which such a position entailed.

*Mr. SPEAKER, interrupting the hon. Member, reminded him that the Amendment did not relate generally to the position of the Marines, but only their to suitability for a particular duty and that his line of remarks therefore was not in order.

Mr. KEARLEY, continuing his remarks amid constant Ministerial cries of "Divide," was understood to say that the question was one deserving of further discussion. ["Divide, divide!"] He should like to hear, for example, what the military representatives had to say about it from the military point of view. ["Divide, divide."] He did not think that, with an important question such as the consideration of the Navy Estimates the discussion should be a restricted one. These were—

And, it being midnight, Mr. Speaker proceeded to interrupt the business; whereupon,

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY rose in his place, and claimed to move "That the Question be now put." [*Ministerial Cheers.*]

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The House divided:—Ayes, 111; Noes, 35.—(Division List, No. 73.)

Question put accordingly, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

The House divided; Ayes, 110; Noes, 30.—(Division List, No. 74.)

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: I claim to move That the main Question be now put, "That Mr. Speaker do leave the Chair."

Main question put accordingly, and agreed to.

Supply considered in Committee.

Navy Estimates, 1897-8.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Committee deferred till Monday next.

Mr. Kearley.

SMALLER DWELLINGS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday 25th March.

LOCOMOTIVES ON HIGHWAYS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday 15th March.

COUNTY COUNCILLORS (QUALIFICATION OF WOMEN) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday 19th March.

SHOP ASSISTANTS (HALF HOLIDAY) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday next.

SHOPS (EARLY CLOSING) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday next.

SHOPS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday next.

ARCHDEACONRY OF LONDON (ADDITIONAL ENDOWMENTS) BILL.

Adjourned debate on Second Reading [24th February] further adjourned till Monday next.

LICENSING EXEMPTION (HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

CRETE.

On the Motion "That this House do now adjourn,"

Mr. JOHN MORLEY (Montrose Burghs) said there was a question his right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition put to the Leader of the House concerning the presentation of the Note to Turkey, and the right hon. Gentleman, as they understood, stated that he was not sure that the Note had been presented, and therefore he was not in a position to tell the House the terms of the Note. The right hon. Gentleman hoped that when the adjournment of the House was moved, he would be able to make a statement to the House of the terms of the demand made to the Sultan by her Majesty's Government in concert with the Powers, and particularly the conditions imposed in regard to the removal of Turkish troops from Crete, and whether, as in the case of Greece, a fixed date had been assigned for the compulsory assent by the Porte to the conditions imposed. He wished to ask whether the right hon. Gentleman was prepared to answer that Question.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Five minutes ago I received a telegram from the Foreign Office, stating that the Note had been presented to the Porte, but not giving the text. I am sorry for that. Under the circumstances I am afraid I cannot give an answer to the Question of the right hon. Gentleman.

MR. J. MORLEY: Are we to understand that a Note has been presented in the name of the Powers to the Porte, of which the representative of the Government in this House is not in possession of a copy? [*Opposition cheers.*]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I have not got the text. I have telegraphed to-day for the text of the Note presented. Five minutes ago I had a telegram to say that it had been presented. I have not got the text.

MR. J. MORLEY: I do not wish to be too pressing, but the Government must, obviously, have in their possession the text of the Note presented to the Porte. Surely, then, the right hon. Gentleman can tell us, in answer to the Question of my right hon. Friend, what were the terms of the Note, in respect of the withdrawal of troops from Crete by the Porte, and whether those terms are identical with, or similar to, the terms of the Greek Note?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: The arrangement was that the Powers should telegraph to the Ambassador at Constantinople on the subject. By inference I assume that as the Note has been presented it is the Note that was agreed to by the Ambassadors. But unfortunately I have not got the text with me. It is not contained in the telegram which I have just had handed to me.

MR. J. MORLEY, amidst Ministerial cries of "Oh" and Opposition cheers, said: The Note is of importance and the country has a great curiosity about it. [*Ministerial cheers.*] From the language used by the right hon. Gentleman in his last answer, there seems to be a possible difference between the Note presented by the Ambassador and the Note agreed to by the Powers. Is the Note that has been presented the Note which all the Powers have agreed to, or is it only the Note which the Ambassador suggested? If it is the Note agreed to by the Powers, of course the Foreign Office here must have it in their possession. [*Opposition cheers.*]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Undoubtedly they must have it substantially, but I doubt whether any verbal change has been made by the Ambassadors at Constantinople. The words of the telegram are: "Supplementary Collective Note respecting Turkish troops in Crete presented to-day." That is the telegram which was handed to me five minutes ago.

MR. J. MORLEY: This Supplementary Note has, according to that telegram, been presented. The Ambassador, who I presume dispatched that telegram, assumed that the recipient of the telegram at the Foreign Office would know to what Supplementary Note he was referring. All I humbly ask is, What was the Supplementary Note?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I understand the right hon. Gentleman's position, and I hope he understands mine. If I had got this telegram an hour ago, I have no doubt I could have got it from the Foreign Office, but unfortunately I got it five minutes ago, and it has not been possible for me to get it from the Foreign Office.

*SIR C. DILKE: The right hon. Gentleman has stated the same thing over and over again. It is conclusive as to the particular point. But surely the right hon. Gentleman can state the substance.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I should not venture to state the substance.

MR. J. MORLEY: But surely the right hon. Gentleman, having at a quarter past four o'clock described to the House his expectation that before this hour arrived he would have received a telegram from Constantinople saying whether or not the Note had been presented yet, has been waiting in hourly expectation of that telegram, and knowing that he would be asked the question which I am asking on behalf of my right hon. Friend, has he not provided himself with a copy of the

Supplementary Note to which the question refers?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I think I can satisfy the right hon. Gentleman at once. As soon as I got private notice of the question of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Monmouthshire, I sent over to the Foreign Office to know whether they had received any information from the Ambassador. They informed me that they had received no information. I then directed them to at once telegraph for information. The telegram was sent somewhat in this form—"Telegraph whether the Note has been presented, and telegraph its text *en clair*." Under those circumstances I did not think it necessary to provide myself, and did not provide myself, with any special copy of the text of the Note which we supposed would be presented. Of course, I thought it would come with the telegram. [*Cheers.*]

MR. J. MORLEY: I have only one more question to ask, and it is this—What is the meaning of asking the Ambassador at Constantinople to telegraph *en clair* the text of a Note of every word of which, I assume, the Foreign Office, the Foreign Secretary, and the Government must have been fully aware? I also wish to know whether the country is to remain in ignorance until Monday afternoon next [*cheers*] as to what the terms of that Note are, and especially upon the point to which our Question refers.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I have no right to dispute the view of the right hon. Gentleman that it is extremely important to know between this and Monday next what is the exact text of the Identic Note presented. I am very sorry that I cannot give the text, but I think it is absolutely unimportant, because the Powers are absolutely determined that the Turkish forces shall, under no circumstances whatever, have any uncontrolled dominion over any part of that island. [*Cheers.*]

MR. J. MORLEY: Is that in the Note?

MR. F. A. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) who was received with Ministerial Cries of "Oh!" said: May I put this question? It is a matter of public importance of the first degree. The telegram received at the Foreign Office speaks of a supplementary Collective Note. Those words imply that a previous Collective Note must have been presented, and I think it is quite clear that the representative of the Foreign Office and the First Lord of the Treasury must be aware of the terms of that Note, and be able to state them. They would also, perhaps, be able to state what are the points on which the Government of this country has suggested to its Ambassador at Constantinople that the first Note should be modified. I therefore ask this specific question, whether there has not been a fresh Note presented, and what that is?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: The supplementary Note did not modify the first Note, it added to it.

MR. CHANNING: What is the first Note?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I have not got the text here.

MR. J. MORLEY: Would the right hon. Gentleman agree, as the text of the Note, as we assume from the right hon. Gentleman's answer, is in the Foreign Office, to supply it to the Press to-night? [*Cheers.*]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I do not believe such a proceeding has ever been taken before. [*Ministerial cheers.*] I believe the French text is not at the Foreign Office, but if, as I assume, the English text is at the Foreign Office it shall be laid on the Table on Monday. [*Opposition Cries of* "Oh!" *and cheers.*]

MR. JOHN DILLON (Mayo, E.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman why it is that the text of the Note to Greece has been supplied to the newspapers and has been all over Europe for the last two or three days, while the text of the Note to Turkey is not published?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I do not know, Sir. I have nothing to do with the Press. It has not been supplied to the Press in England.

*SIR C. DILKE: Will the right hon. Gentleman inquire whether a special *Gazette* could be issued.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I will inquire whether such a thing has been done; I am not aware that any such course has been pursued before.

House adjourned at Twenty-five minutes before One o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 8th March 1897.

INFANT LIFE PROTECTION BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to amend the law for the better protection of infant life was presented by the Earl of Denbigh; Read 1^a; and to be printed.—(No. 25.)

DANISH TRAWLERS IN SCOTCH WATERS.

The Marquess of HUNTLY asked the Secretary of State for Scotland a Question of which he had given him private notice, namely, whether the reports in the Scottish newspapers that Danish trawlers had been fishing in Moray Firth for three weeks past, and that they had been seen and permitted to continue fishing by Her Majesty's ship *Jackal* were correct, and that they were landing their fish for sale at British ports?

***The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Lord Balfour)**: In reply to the noble Marquess, I have to state that at the end of last month the Fishery Board did receive a Report from the Commander of Her Majesty's ship *Jackal*, to the effect that the Danish trawler *Dania* had been discovered seven miles east-north-east of Tarbett Ness, with her port trawl down in the water. In consequence of that Report and of other similar reports, which, however, were not quite so definite, I have given instructions to the Fishery Board for Scotland to prevent, under the powers of Section 8 of the Herring Fisheries (Scotland) Act of 1889, the landing or sale in Scotland of fish from the *Dania* caught within the area prohibited by the bye-laws. We have not had reports of any other trawler except the *Dania*. The noble Marquess's Question deals with British ports, but, of course, he is aware that I have no jurisdiction over, and no power myself to obtain information from, any port which is not a Scottish port.

The Marquess of HUNTLY: I am informed the *Dania* is landing her fish at the port of Hull, so as to evade the jurisdiction the noble Lord exercises. Can the noble Lord do nothing in that case?

***Lord BALFOUR**: On that point I have no information, but I shall be glad to make inquiry.

PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE (WOMEN) BILL [H.L.].

Viscount TEMPLETOWN: My Lords, On rising to move the Second Reading of the Parliamentary Franchise (Women) Bill, I desire to say that I was asked by the Parliamentary Committee for Women's Suffrage to introduce a Bill in your Lordships' House which would be a reasonable and moderate Measure and such as would remove any existing injustice. The Committee have intrusted their cause to me in regard to the scope of the Measure, and I received a copy of a Resolution from them signed by the Chairman of the meeting, Sir Richard Temple, by which the Committee pledges itself—

> "That if in the interests of the Measure, to facilitate its passage through the legislature, it be found necessary to modify the provisions of the Bill, that such modification will receive their most careful consideration."

If the arguments used to-day in favour of this Bill convince your Lordships that an injustice exists in properly-qualified women being excluded from the Franchise, and that their inclusion in it would add security to property and benefit the State, and your Lordships give the Bill a Second Reading, I can only say that any reasonable Amendments which may be moved in Committee on the Bill will be considered from a co-operative and not a hostile point of view. I particularly wish to emphasise this, because in such consultations I have been fortunate enough to have with Members of your Lordships' House and others, it seems to me that the overwhelming proportion of criticisms levelled at the Women's Suffrage Bill are, where applicable, such as should be answered during the Committee stage of the Bill. I venture to hope, therefore, that, undeterred by any doubt as to making this Bill in Committee such as it should be when it passes this House, your Lordships will to-day consider only the question of principle involved in the Bill, and if satisfied that an injustice exists and ought to be removed, to remember, as Mr. Gladstone is reported to have said on one occasion, when passing a Bill through the Legislature, that "justice delayed is justice denied." Now, my Lords, there are many justifications for passing a Bill enfranchising properly-qualified women, but I will only refer to those that seem the most important, premising only that it appears that the right of such women—and such women only—to vote is admittedly a natural right, and it is not their entry into the Franchise but their exclusion from it that has to be justified; that it is not for me to prove that right, but for the opponents of Women's Suffrage to produce overwhelming proof, if they can, to show why it is right and expedient to withhold the vote from them. The principle of giving women votes was affirmed in another place without a Division in 1886, and lately, by a very large majority, while those who supported Women's Suffrage consisted of a majority of every political denomination. I need not point out that this question has been discussed for 30 years, and it has during that period received the explicit support of Leaders of thought in all Parties; and particularly from Leaders of this House and the House of Commons. It has been the subject of strong and favourable resolutions passed most unanimously or by overwhelming majorities of various political organisations throughout the country—for instance, the Annual Conference of Conservative and Constitutional Associations at Birmingham in 1891; the Birmingham Liberal Association General Council of 2,000; the National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations, England and Scotland; the National Liberal Federation; the Welsh Division of National Union Conservative and Constitutional Associations; Conference of Conservative Party of North Devon; the Lancashire and Cheshire Division of the National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations; the Northern Union of Conservative Associations; and the Scottish Branch Primrose League Grand Habitation. Mr. Arthur Balfour, speaking in the House of Commons on 27 April 1892, said:—

> "We support the Bill for practical reasons. I think those who wished to be enfranchised have used the only methods they could use in the matter—they have expressed their desire to obtain the vote on platforms, and by public meetings, petitions, and votes and resolutions."

Petitions have been presented, over 700 of them with thousands of signatures, and, indeed, I may say that every constitutional method of proving Women's Suffrage is demanded by the women of this country has been exhausted, up to the point that the one thing in this respect still needed is adequate consideration of the question at your Lordships' hands. The injustice which women complain of existing is thus stated by them:—

> "That whereas women have to pay taxes in the same way that men equally situated do, they have no representation, and this is against a fundamental doctrine of the Constitution that taxation and representation should go together, and that those who have to contribute towards taxation should have a voice in choosing those who are to make the laws, and Parliament cannot sufficiently reflect the wishes of the people while so many desirable voters are excluded."

As an example of the injustice that women complain of, I would ask your Lordships' attention, and more particularly of those who are interested in agricultural questions, to the figures quoted by Sir Albert Rollit during the Debate in the House of Commons in 1892:—

> "In relation to the great question of the land, the House, perhaps, hardly realises how many cultivators are in the unfortunate position of having lost their husbands, and are yet carrying on their farms, employing numbers of labourers who have votes, while they, though more qualified in every respect, have none, simply and only because they are women! Few know how many women are farmers and graziers—some 20,000—and few, perhaps, realise that the agricultural interest loses through this cause something like 140,000 votes."

Then, my Lords, what was Mr. Gladstone's view in 1870 as a matter of injustice? Mr. Gladstone, on the Women's Disabilities Bill speech in the House of Commons, 1870, said:—

> "I admit, at any rate, as far as I am able to judge, there is more presumptive ground for change in the law than some of the opponents of the Measure are disposed to own. . . I cannot help thinking that, for some reason or other, there are various important particulars in which women obtain much less than justice under social arrangements. . . I may be told that there is no direct connection between this and the Parliamentary Franchise, and I admit it, but at the same time I am by no means sure that these inequalities may not have an indirect connection with a state of

> law in which the balance is generally cast too much against women, and too much in favour of men. There is one instance which has been quoted, and I am not sure there is not something in it—I mean the case of farms. . . . I believe to some extent in the competition for that particular employment women suffer in a very definite manner in consequence of their want of qualification to vote."

I do not wish to imply even that these are Mr. Gladstone's last words, but I have never known of any attempt on his part to try and dispute the fact he stated that "there are various important particulars with reference to women's disabilities in which they obtain much less justice than men." Here I may ask this. Is it not an injustice to a woman that, while she may hold property and must discharge its liabilities, she may not represent it even by a vote at the elections, and is therefore unable to safeguard it in any way; that she is, in fact, placed in the position of the men of whom Mr. Gladstone is reported to have said, "They have no votes, and may be safely neglected." I have so far pleaded more particularly for the franchise for properly-qualified women on the ground of justice to them, and on the ground of increasing their influence in defending their own property; but I venture to think that as strong a claim can be made on behalf of the State for the enfranchisement of duly-qualified women. At present the State is deprived of the vote of those who specially represent the opinions of women on questions on which women are experts. Surely this is not right, and, if properly-qualified women are enfranchised, the Constitution will be *pro tanto* stronger and more stable. What are the questions on which educated and capable women are experts, often indeed greater experts than men? There is the education question, hospitals, the management of schools, the employment of women, the Poor law, housing of the poor, the question of asylums, prisons, sanitation of the homes of the poor and workshops, various questions in relation to industry and trade, factories, the safeguarding of children, and what is known as the Social Question, besides other matters. Thus, my Lords, I believe that, once you give responsible women the vote, they will use it to try and make the Legislature stamp out by proper regulations the disease which, with its unlimited ramifications, is threatening to destroy the health, if only it goes on unchecked long enough, of the men, women, and children, of this country, and not only that but to destroy the constitution of the generations yet to come. Then, is it wise, my Lords, to exclude on the ground of State interests the women owners of property included in this Bill? When, in 1874, the Representation of the People Bill was before the House of Commons, and an Amendment enfranchising women was under consideration, the late Lord Iddesleigh, then Sir Stafford Northcote, spoke on June 12th, as follows:—

> "The point upon which we lay stress is that upon which the late Lord Beaconsfield laid stress, and upon which so much stress has been laid to-night, namely, that by excluding women you are excluding a large portion of the property owners of this country from representation and from their share in the legislation."

Before concluding my arguments in favour of the principle of this Bill and dealing with some of the objections, I will quote two extracts from speeches made by the Marquess of Salisbury. At a meeting convened by the Primrose League at Edinburgh, in November 1886, Lord Salisbury said:—

> "I earnestly hope that the day is not far distant when women also will bear their share in voting for Members of Parliament—[*cheers*]—and in determining the policy of the country. I can conceive no argument by which they are excluded. It is obvious that they are abundantly as well fitted as many who now possess the suffrage, by knowledge, by training, and by character, and that their influence is likely to weigh in a direction which, in an age so material as ours, is exceedingly valuable, namely, in the direction of morality and religion."

Again, at Covent Garden, on the 29th April 1896, speaking on a new influence in politics:—

> "It has largely brought into action the influence of many men who otherwise would not have devoted their efforts to the support of the country, it has knit together classes who were apart before, and whom it was the interest of agitators to keep apart—[*cheers*]—and it has brought into action for the support of the fundamental institutions of society those who are the most deeply interested in them—namely, the women of England. [*Cheers.*] I am one of those—I speak only for myself individually—who are of opinion that women have not the voice they ought to have in the selection of the representatives of the English people."

I will now briefly refer to some of the objections raised against Women's Franchise. Amongst them we find it stated that, if votes were given to women, the vote would be followed by their having seats in Parliament. It was in the Debate in 1892 that Mr. Arthur Balfour disposed of this objection. He said:—

> "The argument which appeals most, I am convinced, to those who oppose this Bill, is the conviction—the ill-founded conviction I think—that it must necessarily carry with it as what they call a logical consequence, the result that women must have a seat in this House, in the Cabinet, and should in all respects, so far as public offices are concerned, be placed on an equality with men. I do not believe a word of that argument. I can quite agree that it is very difficult to stop in such a course—to fix an arbitrary point and say then you will stop—if the arguments for going further are precisely those that made you travel thus far. The point, therefore, to consider is, can the arguments that are brought forward in favour of this Bill be also brought forward in favour of women having a seat in this House? No, Sir, they cannot."

And again:—

> "If you want to prevent further progress you ought to stop at a point where defence is possible; but at the present point logical defence is not possible."

I believe, my Lords, I am correct in saying that there is a distinct and legally-recognised difference between the right to vote and the right to sit in a deliberative Assembly; the disqualification for the latter has been decided to exist, according to Sir Albert Rollit, as to women, and it has long subsisted in the case of the clergy and the Civil Service. Another objection put forward is that women do not want the franchise. Where is the record of any public meeting in this country against Women's Suffrage? Where are the petitions, signed by the women it is proposed to enfranchise by this Bill, against Women's Suffrage? Women have worked to return Members to Parliament favourable to Women's Suffrage. Where are the women who have worked to keep out of Parliament men favourable to Women's Suffrage? My Lords, I ask you to compare these two facts; on the one hand large numbers of meetings and petitions, and plenty of work in favour of Women's Suffrage by women, against whom no word can be said; and on the other hand, what? Why, nil. So much for that objection. I lately read that a right hon. Gentleman in another place urged as an objection that as giving the franchise at all meant giving it to every woman, and as there are 1,200,000 more women than men (I believe the last census gave it at 900,000. But what is a trifling error of 300,000?), women with votes would have the predominance. I differ entirely with the right hon. Gentleman. How can you justify the argument that a Bill which only enfranchises a limited number of properly-qualified women, is a sufficient cause for enfranchising all women without any qualification? Then there is no ground for supposing that all the women any Bill would enfranchise are going to vote; and again, it is against experience and reason that all the women would vote against all the men; and if these two objections to the argument of the right hon. Gentleman are admitted, and I cannot see how it can be otherwise, his contention falls to the ground. In conclusion, my Lords, I would say that I have tried to place before you, I am afraid but very indifferently, the consensus of opinion on this question of some of the most eminent and trusted leaders of thought of different political opinions, because I think your Lordships will rightly attach much more importance to their views than to mine, however similar mine may be. I belong to no Women's Suffrage Society, but plead for this Bill on behalf of those whom it would enfranchise. I ask your Lordships not to allow any arguments which may be put forward, however eloquently, to try and induce you to vote against this Bill, to obscure the main points of my contention, viz., that it is right that the property which has so long been disfranchised should now have representation. If you feel, my Lords, that property needs no further safeguarding, refuse a Second Reading to this Bill; but if, on the other hand, you disapprove of attacks on property, be it that of the rich man or rich woman, or poor man or poor woman, then, my Lords, I would ask you to pass this Bill; and while you will remove the sense of injustice which now rankles in the minds of thousands of capable women, who are eager to support the Crown and Constitution of this Kingdom, you will at the same time remove from our legislation the discredit that attaches to it in excluding from voting on the great questions of the State those who are admittedly the most moral and religious portion of the community.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The DUKE of DEVONSHIRE): In the unavoidable absence of the Prime Minister, he has asked me to state to your Lordships the advice which he would have given to the House had he been able to be present. It is perfectly well known that there exists among many Members of the present Government as to the merits of this question a certain amount of difference of opinion, and that it has been agreed that it should be regarded as an open question; but I think there is no difference of opinion in the minds of the Government that it would be an undesirable course, and in some respects perhaps even an unexampled course, for this House to undertake what is, or purports to be, a reform of the House of Commons. I think that such a course would not strengthen your Lordships' hands if, as is probable, on some future occasion it may be necessary for you to take into consideration and review proposals made for the further reform of the other House of Parliament. It is generally, I think, acknowledged that the proper function of this House is to review and to weigh calmly and deliberately the legislative proposals which come to you from the other House, if necessary to suggest or introduce amendments, and upon some occasions to afford to the country, and even to Parliament itself, an opportunity of reconsidering what may appear to be crude and immature suggestions. I do not think that any useful action which your Lordships can take in this direction would be assisted in the future if your Lordships were to adopt the precedent of pressing upon the consideration of the other House legislative Measures of the character contained in this Bill. I hope I shall not be supposed to intend to speak with any disrespect whatever of the other House of Parliament, but I think in the opinion of many persons the reputation of the House of Commons for sobriety of judgment was not enhanced when, on a Wednesday afternoon, after a very short Debate, the principle of this Measure was recently affirmed. ["Hear, hear!"] For myself I regret that it was left to the Leader of the Opposition to point out the levity with which such a Measure as this was proposed, and its principle sanctioned after a Debate which must to most persons appear absolutely inadequate in comparison with the great importance of the subject. ["Hear, hear!"] I regret it was also left to the Leader of the Opposition to point out that proposals such as these, if they can properly be made at all or adopted, ought to be made, if not upon the authority of the Government, at least upon the authority of some responsible Leader of the Party. But I think your Lordships would be exposed to a much graver and better founded charge of levity in this matter if you were, at the invitation of my noble Friend, to abandon the position which alone, in my opinion, you can occupy with dignity and credit—that of a Legislative whose function it is to review and weigh Measures sent to you from the other House of Parliament — and were yourselves to initiate legislation of a character so grave and important as this. ["Hear, hear!"] I do not think that anyone can doubt that this Measure does not involve constitutional changes of an extremely grave and important character, and it is fraught with possible and even probable consequences which it is almost impossible at present to foresee. ["Hear, hear!"] Small as may be the immediate effect which would be brought about either by the Measure which was proposed in the other House or the different Measure which is now before you, we cannot entertain any feeling of certainty that we have reached the limits of electoral reform, and that we may not have some day to deal with the question of manhood suffrage; and I confess that I find it very difficult to discover any reason why, if the principle of manhood suffrage should ever be adopted in this country, as it has been in European countries, and if you assent to the principle contained in this Bill, it would be possible to stop short of adult female suffrage also. [*Cheers.*] I do not think I need give other reasons as showing the inexpediency of considering the subject on the present occasion, but I might also point out that the Bill which has been passed in the other House, and which may come ultimately in the course of the present Session before your Lordships, contains, in one important respect, a different provision from that contained in this Bill. It does not seem to me desirable that your Lordships should hamper yourselves for the consideration of that Measure by adopting the principle of the Bill proposed by my noble Friend. Having said this much, I do not think I ought to conceal, and I have no desire to disguise the fact, that personally I entertain a very strong and clear opinion on this subject, and that if I were called upon to give a vote on the principle of the Measure I should give it unhesitatingly in the negative. [*Cheers.*] That, however, is not the ground for the course which I am about to ask your Lordships to take. The position of the Government in the matter is, that it is not one upon which the House of Lords ought to be called, at the present time, to express an opinion. That being our opinion, I think that it is better to abstain from any argument either for or against the Bill. That would be to a certain extent an admission that we consider this Bill a proper subject for discussion in your Lordships' House, and that is precisely the position we are not prepared to take up. Therefore, I will conclude by moving the previous question, and ask your Lordships, by assenting to that Motion, to decline to consider the question at present or to enter upon an academical discussion on the question until it is presented to you in the only manner in which it can properly and constitutionally be presented to you, in the shape of a legislative proposal coming to this House from the House of Commons. I beg to move the previous question. ["Hear, hear!"]

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: I have heard with much satisfaction the statement made by the noble Duke, and I cannot add anything to his arguments. I think it must be clear that, generally speaking, the last thing we ought to agree to is that a Bill enlarging the franchise should originate in this House in a case where the adoption of the principle contained in that Bill really involves a change almost, I was going to say, the most revolutionary that could be adopted in regard to the franchise in this country. I have no desire any more than the noble Duke to conceal the fact that if I had to give a vote upon the principle which I believe to be involved in any Measure of this kind I should unhesitatingly vote against it, and should give the most uncompromising opposition to any proposal to give the franchise to women. ["Hear, hear!"] That, however, is not the subject under discussion. I shall follow the example of the noble Duke and shall not offer any argument upon the subject. The position I wish to occupy in reference to this question is precisely that occupied by the noble Duke; indeed, as far as it is possible for anyone in Opposition to be in the same position as a Member of the Government. I am in that position, because the same difference of opinion on this subject exists among the Party with whom I have to act as exists among the supporters of the Government. In these circumstances I wish most strongly to urge upon the House the desirability of not proceeding with this Bill at present, nor of entering into any discussion upon the subject with which it deals. ["Hear, hear!"]

Previous question put, whether the said question shall now be put; Resolved in the negative.

ARMY HEAD-DRESS.

THE EARL of STRAFFORD asked the noble Marquess the Secretary for War whether any decision had been arrived at with respect to the new head-dress for the Army.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE): The question of the noble Earl appears to proceed upon the assumption that it has been decided to introduce a new head-dress for the Army. No such decision has been arrived at. Proposals were made to me affecting the head-dress of a portion of the auxiliary forces, and I thought it desirable to refer the whole question as to military head-dress to a Committee. That Committee has not yet reported, but it is expected to report at an early date. Until the Report has been received it is quite impossible to arrive at any decision upon the subject. ["Hear, hear!"]

House adjourned at Five minutes past Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a Quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 8th March 1897.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY BILL.

*Sir **CHARLES DILKE** (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) moved—

> "That any Petition of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, praying to be heard against Clauses 37 and 38 of the Bill, and so much of the Preamble as relates thereto, presented five clear days before the meeting of the Committee, be referred to the Committee, and that the Petitioners may be heard by themselves, their Counsel, and Agents on their Petition against the Bill."

The right hon. Baronet said he first wished to make a little explanation on a side issue, arising out of some remarks made by the hon. Member for Islington, who, having sympathy with the Motion, complained of a distinction being drawn between the clerks in the employment of the company and their railway servants. On the part of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants there was no desire to draw any such distinction; the suggestion for the distinction came from the company. The Amalgamated Society contained a good many clerks, and some stationmasters among its members. In this Bill the society objected to Clauses 37 and 38, and upon these clauses they desired to be heard before the Committee. Clause 37 was the Savings Bank clause, and to that clause they had objections, which he had already stated to the House, and which, therefore, he would now only touch upon briefly. The workmen did not desire to invest their savings with the company, because they objected to their employers being in a position to obtain knowledge of their pecuniary condition; and they pointed out that it might have a bearing on rate of wages or on strikes under certain circumstances. Personally, he did not approve of these Savings Bank clauses in Railway Bills, and thought them outside the scope of such Bills and the purposes for which railway companies existed; but as he regarded this Bill as less objectionable than the Lancashire and Yorkshire Bill, to which he had given notice of a similar Motion, and upon which he believed he had the stronger case, he did not propose, as far as he personally could affect the challenge, to take a division on both Bills. The objections to this Bill had been somewhat modified by the fact that on Clause 38 the company had agreed to make it plain, and had given an undertaking that it should not be compulsory on the servants of the company to join. The Great Northern Company had circulated a statement of their view, in which were one or two statements to which he would have to take exception. They said that the promoters had received no objection from their servants to either of the clauses. That might be so, so far as the knowledge of the company extended; but it was not the case in fact. The servants of the company, from different important stations, had held a meeting, and he had met them. They expressed the strongest objection to the clauses, and if they had not done so to the company itself it was probably because of the somewhat delicate relations between the servants of a great company and their employees, and the reluctance of the men to come forward with objections to the course proposed. Though the argument had more force as against the Lancashire and Yorkshire Bill, it had a general application to both Bills, that the representative Society of Railway Servants ought to be heard before the Committee to whom these Bills were referred. The men held a very strong opinion on the proposals in the clauses, and there were points of detail on which they desired to be heard. The House had agreed to an Amendment of the Standing Orders, by which the Miners' Federation, and other bodies, had been given the right to be heard on Mining Bills or Bills of a description on which their interests were affected. This was a principle that ought to be extended, not only as regarded this Bill, but in regard to all Bills of a similar character; and the Chairman of Committees would do well to allow the representation of this particular body on the present occasion, and to propose an Amendment of the Standing Orders, by which such representation before Committees should be made general in future.

MR. T. LOUGH (Islington, W.) seconded the Motion. It seemed to him an eminently reasonable proposal. In the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants there was a great organisation, which represented the opinions of a great body of men; and he could not conceive any railway company having any objection to the expression of the opinion of the men on a matter in which they were so much interested. They had a precedent lately in the conduct of the North-Eastern Railway Company, which, when it got into difficulties with its own servants, raised no objection to receiving and hearing representatives of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, and he certainly thought there were some provisions in these special clauses which fully justified the Motion his right hon. Friend had made. For instance, one of the clauses said, "Every such deposit shall be charged on the net profits of the company." It ought not to be a charge on the profits merely, but ought also to be charged against any property the company might have. Seeing that they had got cash or money from these men, they ought to be responsible in anything they had got to make it good. It gave another illustration of the desirability of hearing the representatives of the men on this point; it was a reasonable and moderate Motion, and he hoped the House would accept it without a Division.

SIR GEORGE RUSSELL (Berks, Wokingham) said he might point out to the House how much in the judgment of those who were competent to know, the influence of the Committees upstairs was destroyed by these constant attempts inside the House to fetter the free-will of a Committee to deal with questions after hearing the evidence. He might point out from his own personal knowledge how by this constantly growing and mischievous tendency railway enterprise was strangled and Measures for the interest of the public and the workmen themselves were deterred from being prosecuted because of the dangers to which, through this novel mode of procedure, Railway Bills were subjected. He would, however, confine himself to the specific merits of the proposal now before the House. He should say the main question which should decide Members would be whether or not these railway savings banks were or were not advantageous to the railway employees at large. He thought he should be able to satisfy the House that they were. He spoke with some interest on this question, because the first railway savings bank was instituted in 1860, with the approval and sanction of that House, by his predecessor in the chair of the South-Eastern Railway Company, Sir Edward Watkin, who first applied it in the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway, of which he was Chairman, and who subsequently introduced it in the South-Eastern Railway, of which he afterwards became Chairman. They were now in force in ten leading railway companies, to the great advantage of the men, and the Great Northern Railway Company now sought, most wisely, as he ventured to think, to introduce one into their company. What were the advantages which the men derived? First and foremost, they got in his company, through the savings bank, 4 per cent. interest on all deposits, with a security as good as Consols. Where elsewhere could they obtain that? They might put in as a deposit any sum from a penny upwards. In their schools at Ashford they had nearly 500 children who put the pence which now came into the pockets of their parents through free education as deposits into the savings bank, and, having early imbibed this habit of thrift, it was invariably found that they continued as depositors when, as grown-up men, they had entered the service of the company. Indeed, it was not an infrequent instance in his company that they had three generations at the same moment contributors by deposits to the savings bank—the grandson in the Ashford School, and his father and grandfather still in the service of the company. There was also the enormous advantage that they could make their deposit straight, on pay-day, to the station-master or whoever else the paymaster might be, so that their savings bank stood between the men and the public house. [*A laugh.*] Hon. Members laughed, but he said that was an enormous advantage, and he could actually furnish illustrations of widows and orphans who had subsequently come and thanked the company for that which they had done in providing means for them which they knew would otherwise inevitably have gone to the public house. In the next place, these deposits could be withdrawn at seven days' notice, and in the case of urgency and illness or in other pressing need could be withdrawn immediately. The right hon. Baronet said there was something inquisitorial in the companies' servants being the receivers of these deposits, so that the men's savings were known. He would put this fact before the House, on his honour in stating it, that, excepting the officer who received the money and the auditors to the bank, the amount of the deposit, or the fact even that a man was a depositor, was absolutely and totally unknown to the chief officers and directors, and he would pledge his honour that in every case where a man came before them with an application, either for an increase of salary or for the receipt of a pension on leaving the service, the fact whether he was or was not a depositor was totally and absolutely unknown to the directors, who dealt with the case solely and exclusively upon the ground of length of service and the number of those who might be dependent upon the applicant for support. The charge, therefore, as to anything inquisitorial or as to a man's private affairs being known to his superiors, was totally without foundation. When the leaders of the Railway Servants' Amalgamated Society were acting in the interests of the men they had his sympathy, but when they were acting, not in the interests of the men, but with the view, perhaps, of getting power for themselves, because they felt the advantages given by the company weakened that power, then his sympathy was not with them but with the men whose interests they were seeking to injure. He hoped he had been able to satisfy the House that if they valued the interests of the men they would, by an overwhelming majority, reject the Resolution which had been moved by the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean.

MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea) said the hon. Gentleman had given the House an eloquent disquisition on the virtue of philanthropy and thrift, but he had not applied his speech to the Amendment before the House. Hon. Members on his side were not denying the virtue of either personal or collective thrift. What they said was that the men interested in both should have an opportunity of going before a Committee of the House of Commons and proving, first, their *bonâ fides* as a thrift agency, and, secondly, giving their view of this question from the railway workman's point of view; and that could only be done by an association speaking on behalf of the men collectively. The hon. Member said that private enterprise had frequently been strangled and damaged by Instructions of this kind being in front of railway legislation. He ventured to say that this Instruction was only one of many that railway legislation would have to confront in this and similar questions if railway directors were going to extend the benefits of railway enterprise. The hon. Member said this particular form of savings bank was welcomed by the men from Ashford. He would confine himself to Ashford because he once worked there for nine months and knew the railway men. The pathetic figure about three generations of workmen having invested in the South Eastern Railway Savings Bank hardly squared with the facts as to what really existed at Ashford, and what the men desired. An ordinary penny savings bank at Ashford, such as the National Penny Bank, would give the people, without the slightest suspicion of compulsion or intimidation, just as good an investment as that provided by the railway company, and they would be able to withdraw their deposits at 24 hours' instead of seven days' notice. He objected to these banks in connection with railway companies. They interfered with private enterprise in the best sense of the word. It was competition by compulsion with private banks and the Post Office which prevented workmen from giving to building socities, trades unions, and friendly societies what the railway companies claimed a lien upon them for, and the fact that the employees invested the money in the savings bank operated to reduce wages when trade was bad, and prevented a rise of wages when trade was good. There were 30,000 depositors in fourteen railway savings banks who had £2,200,000 to their account. They were not platelayers, shunters, or goods guards, but mainly skilled artisans, clerks, station masters, and others. The fact that the average deposit was £75 indicated the high wage of the depositor.

It was said that these railway banks encouraged thrift. He did not believe it. But why should the men be restricted to one form of investment? Many workmen were desirous of saving money to buy a house, a small piece of land for an allotment, or to lend to relatives in business but the compunction exercised upon them by the fear of losing their employment, or not getting their proper share of promotion if they did not join the savings bank impelled them to invest, whereas if they had absolute freedom they would not do so. The hon. Member let the cat out of the bag when he said that the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants wanted to destroy the railway banks because it would destroy their power and lessen their influence. The obvious retort was that the railway companies wanted to compulsorily direct the savings of their workmen to keep them from their friendly societies and trades unions. He hoped the House of Commons would do justice to the men and provide that they should not be constrained to invest in railway savings banks, but be left free to make their investments as their opinion dictated. It was said that the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants was not a large or influential body. It had 44,000 men employed in the railway service, and 1,000 or 1,500 on the Great Northern Railway. But it was not fair to judge this Instruction from the point of view of one trade union. There were five trade unions in the railway service, with a membership of betwen 60,000 and 70,000 men, who had a right to a *locus standi* before the Committee equally with the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. There were seven or eight other trades unions with another 50,000 members, who had also a right to be heard before the Committee. Beyond these there were five millions of members of friendly societies, and at their conference on 21st March 1894, they unanimously voted against this system of savings banks and compulsory accident, benefit, and pension funds. When were the companies going to cease extending their operations? They originally came to Parliament to acquire and run a business for the carriage of goods, minerals, passengers, and stock. But now they ran hotels, refreshment rooms, private privilege cabs, savings banks, and other things.

*Mr. SPEAKER reminded the hon. Member that the Question before the House was whether the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants should be heard before the Committee.

Mr. BURNS bowed to Mr. Speaker's ruling, and concluded by hoping the railway servants and members of friendly societies would be allowed to put their case before the Committee. He believed the Committee would be impressd by the facts and figures they would put before them, and he trusted the House would unanimously throw out for the last time this attempt to introduce another chloroforming agent to seduce workmen from their friendly societies, trades unions, and savings banks which they wanted, but did not desire from their employers.

*Mr. F. W. FISON (York, W.R., Doncaster) said that no compulsion would be introduced if the clause were inserted in the Bill. It was precisely because the humbler class of railway servants were unable to enjoy the benefits of existing societies that the Great Northern Railway proposed to found savings banks, and because the superannuation fund was scarcely suited for them. He contended in reply to what had been said by the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean, that railway servants had shown a great desire to join these banks in connection with the companies. As to the employers knowing the amount of the men's savings, no deduction could be made from the deposit, which was absolutely the property of the depositor, and the railway company could not lay a finger upon it. The interests of the men were looked after by the Registrar of Friendly Societies. The clauses under discussion were submitted to and approved by him, and it was necessary to obtain his approval of the rules or any alteration or Amendment made in them. ["Hear, hear!"] As to the second clause before the House, the Superannuation Fund was purely optional. The joint lines to which it applied constituted a very large proportion of the mileage of the Great Northern Company, there being 524 miles of them. Without this clause the railway servants who belonged to the Superannuation Fund of the parent company would, when promoted to better posts on the joint lines, suffer an injustice. In two years the general Superannuation Fund had received something like 1,400 applications, a considerable number of them from the joint lines. The Superannuation Fund was enacted in 1872, and brought into force in 1875. There was ample protection for the men in the Savings Banks, and this Bill only gave the men on the joint lines an option of joining—there was no compulsion to join the Fund. The Amalgamated Society only represented some of the railway servants —[" hear, hear!"]—in varying proportions according to the different districts and lines. The Great Northern Company recognised that every servant had a perfect right to belong to this society if he wished, and also had a perfect right to abstain from it. He thought it was the officials of the society, and not the men themselves, who objected to these schemes. There were a vast number of men not represented on this society who desired to join the Superannuation Fund and Savings Banks.

*CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.) said he represented a large number, not of railway men, but of the working classes generally, and, from his experience of them during the last ten years, he ventured to assert that they were one and all averse from any system which tampered with their wages or savings. They looked on attempts such as these as a desire on the part of capital to take advantage of labour, and to gain another weapon by which to operate against the working man when the interests of capital and labour clashed. There might be no direct compulsion, but the compulsion, though indirect, was equally potent. Working men, as a rule, preferred to invest their money in Friendly Societies, controlled by their own class; they did not demand these Savings Banks controlled by their employers. They were told that the applications were voluntary, but he should like to know whether they were obtained through officials of the company. He believed the reason why hon. Members did not want the Amalgamated Society to be heard was because the society represented a large number of railway employees who were dead against schemes of this kind. They were led to suppose that the railway companies were doing this in the interest of their employees; but the whole tendency of the present age was for the employer to protect himself, just as did the employees.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS (Mr. J. W. LOWTHER, Cumberland, Penrith) said the right hon. Gentleman had appealed directly to him, otherwise he should not have addressed the House. It was obvious that the question they were discussing was not the advisability of establishing Savings—[" hear, hear!"] —Banks, or their merits or demerits. The only question before the House was whether a certain society which claimed to represent the railway servants of a particular company should be entitled to appear before the Committee with regard to certain clauses in this Bill. If the interests of those railway servants were injuriously affected, he thought the House would be anxious that they should be represented before the Committee in accordance with the usual practice in regard to those whose interests were injuriously affected. He did not himself see, however, how they were injuriously affected. There was no necessity for the men to join these Savings Banks, and it was open to them to abstain from doing so. In the second place, the Standing Order of the House laid down that certain persons or societies, if they sufficiently represented the agriculture, trade, mining, or commerce of any district to which a Bill related, should under certain circumstances have a *locus standi.* It was clear that, under that Standing Order, the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants did not come in, and if they were to admit them he thought they must either amend their Standing Order or introduce a new Standing Order in order to provide for their admission. For these two reasons he must oppose the Instruction.

MR. B. PICKARD (York, W.R., Normanton) asked how the miners could be heard under the Standing Order.

MR. SYDNEY GEDGE (Walsall) said he was anxious to give a right vote on this question. He entirely agreed with his right hon. Friend that everyone who had a grievance should be heard, but in saying that he did not think these men had any grievance was, he thought, rather to prejudge the question. He thought any large class of men who imagined that they had a grievance should have an opportunity of stating their case. In the present instance it would occasion no delay. They were told, and it was not contradicted, that this society represented four thousand, or some substantial number, of the servants of the railway company. No harm would be done by allowing them to be heard before the Committee; but if they were not allowed to be heard, having, as they thought, a real grievance, they would be dissatisfied, and think that they had been deprived by the House of a remedy to which they were entitled.

*SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Monmouthshire, W.) said that the Chairman of Committees, who had put the case very fairly before the House, had referred to Standing Order 133B. That Standing Order declared that where a Chamber of Commerce or a Shipping, Mining, or Miners' Association, sufficiently representing agriculture, land, mining, or commerce in any district to which a Private Bill related, petitioned that their interests would be injuriously affected by the provisions of the Bill, it was competent for the Committee on the Bill to hear them. That asserted a principle in regard to certain interests that they should have a *locus standi* before Private Bills Committees, which they were not allowed by the general rule. The question was whether the Standing Order should be confined to the particular interests mentioned. The Chairman of Committees had thrown out a suggestion that the Standing Order might be amended. But it would take some time to alter a Standing Order, owing to the slowness of the procedure of the House, and if the House was prepared to alter the Standing Order so as to admit classes like those now under consideration, surely they ought to do it in this particular case by a vote of the House. He thought that by so doing the House would be acting in accordance with the spirit of the Standing Order, for there was no reason for a distinction being made between a Miners' Association and a Society of Railway Servants. The Chairman of Committees had said that he could not see that the railway servants were injuriously affected by the provisions of the Bill. At all events, the railway servants claimed the right to be heard; and what injury could possibly accrue to the railway company by those men being heard before the Committee? Most of the interests, allowed a *locus standi* by the Standing Order, represented not labour but capital. Out of the bodies mentioned, only one, the Miners' Association, could be said to represent labour. The House ought not to admit the large number of Associations that represented the capitalist classes, while they admitted only one body representing the labouring classes. He did not desire to injuriously affect in any way the great railway interest of the country, who carried on their business so much to the advantage of all classes of the community. But surely it must be to the interest of this railway company to allow their servants to be heard before the Committee. He had heard of the case of a single landholder opposing a Bill. Here was a large class of men who fancied, rightly or wrongly, that they had a grievance, and why should not the House allow them to be heard, seeing that it could be in accordance with the principle of the Standing Order. The Motion would only give the railway servants a *locus standi*. It would not decide anything in their favour as opposed to the railway company. It merely conformed to the general principle of our legislation, whether public or private, that all persons having an interest should be heard.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet) said he could not follow the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition in his reference to the Standing Order. If the course suggested by the right hon. Gentleman were pursued, it would set an entirely new precedent. The Standing Order referred to Chambers of Commerce, shipping, mining or Miners' Associations. Those were general terms. They could not be held to include a society which, according to the hon. Member for Battersea, represented one-tenth, and according to the hon. Member for Islington, one-fifth of the railway servants.

MR. BURNS said that the right hon. Member was wrong on both points. The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants had 44,000 members, and there were six other societies which, with the Amalgamated Society, represented between 70,000 and 80,000 railway servants.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER said the hon. Gentleman had put his case far better than he could have put it himself. He was leading gradually up to the point which the hon. Gentleman had put so clearly and distinctly before the House. He had said that the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants represented one-tenth of railway servants. The hon. Member for Islington said that it represented one-fifth. In connection with the Bill before the House, the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants represented 4,000 out of 25,000 servants employed by the company. The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants was, as the hon. Member for Battersea had pointed out, only one out of seven such societies. If the House were to follow the suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition and allow one society out of seven to be mentioned in the Standing Order, that would be an innovation for which there was no precedent.

MR. EDWARD STRACHEY (Somerset, S.) said that the railway directors were the only hon. Members of the House who objected to the principle of the Motion, which was that a society representing so many thousands of men had a right to come before a Private Bill Committee of this House, and he challenged any hon. Member not a railway director to defend the action taken up by the railway directors. The railway directors seemed to think that the interests of the workmen would be very well looked after by the railway directors. The hon. Member for Doncaster had said that if they admitted one of these societies they would have to admit all of them. He could understand that objection coming from a railway director, but not from any other hon. Member. The real case was this, that hon. Gentlemen, railway directors on the other side of the House, objected to what they considered was an interference between the railway companies and their employees. The railway dirctors were trying to influence this House in a direction that led to the paying of larger dividends to their shareholders. He would vote on one principle and one principle only, namely, that it was perfectly right that a large society of working men, such as the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, should have a *locus standi* to appear before a Private Bill Committee of the House, in regard to a Bill affecting their interests.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said that the Debate had raised two distinct issues. The first was the general principle whether these societies should be allowed a *locus standi* before a Committee? That was arguable, but it was not the Motion before the House. The Motion was a distinct assertion that one particular society should be heard, not on the general merits of the Bill, but in opposition to two clauses which were the most beneficial clauses that could be put into any such Bill. These two clauses were to enable savings banks to be started, the depositors being given the best security which the railway company could offer—their claims were to rank immediately after the debts of the company. He had been engaged for many years in endeavouring to promote schemes of thrift, and to induce employers to do their duty in that respect to the workmen; and he could not conceive anything more calculated to promote the well-being of the workpeople than these clauses, which, be it noted, did not make the scheme compulsory. If the trade union which objected to the clauses had objected to such clauses not being included in the Bill, he should have thought it a reasonable proposition. Here was an enormous corporation wishing to do its duty to its workmen, and those who professed to represent labour opposed the proposition. It was true that the trade unions, to their honour, had made similar provisions for encouraging thrift; but, would even the hon. Member for Battersea say that too much was done in this direction? It was said that the real object of the clauses was to injure the trade union. But if a large employer could, by promoting the well-being of his people, make them so contented and satisfied that the trade union had not so much to do, that was not an evil, but a great good. Was it creditable that such a proposal should be to the detriment of the workman? The man with something in the bank was in a better position to make terms with his employer than the man with not a shilling in the world. The House ought to consider whether these clauses did not tend to industrial peace.

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! That is a question which may have to be discussed before the Committee. It is not the question before the House now.

Mr. BARTLEY said that he himself was very interested in railway workmen, of whom he had a great number in his own constituency. He did not know what their views were, but he could not conceive them objecting to these clauses. He did not speak as a director, he had never been one, nor as a shareholder; but simply as one who had worked to promote thrift all his life.

*Mr. CHARLES HARRISON (Plymouth) said that the Instruction related to Clauses 37 and 38 of the Bill. The 37th Clause established a Savings Bank. The 38th Clause set up a Provident and Superannuation Fund, not for the first time, but upon the lines of the Great Northern Act 1872. That Act, nearly a quarter of a century old, laid down principles which were good enough in those days, but which should not be extended at the present date. The Great Northern Act of 1872 fixed the fund as extending only to old and disabled servants of the company. The present Bill extends it to servants of another company—another class, and a large class is therefore admitted to the fund. Now, a superannuation scheme depends upon being based on sound acturial calculations, upon the rates to be contributed, the conditions of retirement, and solvency; but this old legislation of 1872 was so extraordinary in its provisions that the Motion now before the House should be accepted so as to give a *locus standi* to those whose wages which under a scheme framed under the power of that Act might be compulsorily stopped might have the opportunity of amending the Bill before the Committee upstairs. Under the Act of 1872, the company may make a contribution up to the amount of the wage-earners' contribution, not exceeding 2½ per cent. the amount contributed by wage-earners to the fund, provided a general meeting of shareholders so assented. The voting of the money on the part of the company was purely voluntary. There was no compulsion on the shareholders to vote any contribution. One year they might do so, another year, in which a strike might have taken place, they might arbitrarily refuse to vote any sum whatsoever, and thereby seriously affect the solvency of the fund. On the other hand, the men's contribution might, under the scheme framed under the powers of the Act of 1872, be made compulsory, and their wages might, under such a scheme, be stopped up to 2½ per cent. of the amount. In substance, therefore, the funds would be the contributions of the wage-earners. It would be made up essentially of contributors' money. Now the Committee of Directors and Chief Officer of the company were, by the Act of 1872 empowered to settle a scheme to deal with this fund of wage-earners, and power by the Act of 1872 is given to them to insert therein provisions to settle what class, what length of service, what amount of contribution is to be obligatory on the wage-earners, under what circumstances the wage-earning contributor to the fund is to cease to be entitled to participate, and what proportion (if any) of the sums contributed is to be payable in the event of death before allowance is granted.

*Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is entering into details which are not justified by the question before the House.

*Mr. HARRISON said that he was pointing out that the powers of this particular Act authorised the scheme drawn up by the directors and engineer to make its provisions compulsory on the men, whilst by Statute it was voluntary on the shareholders. They were so extraordinary in many respects that it was essential that the wage-earning contributors should have a *locus standi* upstairs in settling the terms on which their funds were to be dealt with. A superannuation fund was a very complicated and difficult thing to manage. The Royal Civil Service Commissioners reported:—

> "That experience has proved it is most difficult, if not impossible, in such a case to prescribe beforehand any scheme of contribution which shall be so adjusted as to supply the requisite amount without surplus or deficiency."

And, although they had the public revenue to fall back upon, the Commissioners considered it expedient to establish a superannuation fund. In this case, owing to the shareholders subscriptions being voluntary, it would be impossible to rely on its income or actuarily base any calculations as to what contributions would make the fund a solvent fund. The company's officials were to undertake this duty. The powers of the Act of 1892 allowed of a scheme being framed which might, if so settled, confiscate a wage-earner's deferred or stopped pay which he had contributed to the fund, if he left the service in consequence of reductions or alterations in the establishment—if he retired before he had earned a superannuation—if he were discharged even without cause. In the case of the Tyne Improvement Act 1890 the right hon. Member for Bodmin, then Chairman of Committees, insisted that in that case, at all events, that the scheme established by that public body, and not a commercial body trading for profit, should contain provisions to allow the wage-earning contributor under all circumstances to take away on leaving the service his own contribution, with simple interest at 2½ per cent. thereon; and would not permit any scheme to be framed which did not secure the return to the wage-earner of his own contribution, which in equity belonged to him as much as if he had deposited them in a savings' bank in his own name, instead of leaving them in the company's hands, as a banker, for the purpose of accumulation. For these reasons he supported the Motion.

MR. W. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick) said that there were 60,000 men in the men's organisation; it was an organisation which had proved very powerful in stopping strikes; and it certainly was not an organisation which should be stifled by the House of Commons. Railway directors always opposed any attempt to preserve the liberty of the subject. He would point out to the Chairman of Committees that, if his ruling was obeyed by the House, it followed that in future all the trade unions and trade organisations would be denied the right of hearing in the private Committees of this House in cases where their liberties and also their earnings were at stake.

The House divided:—Ayes, 145; Noes, 188.—(Division List, No. 75.)

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY BILL.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE moved:—

"That any Petition of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants praying to be heard against Clauses 25 and 26 of the Bill, and so much of the Preamble as relates thereto, presented five clear days before the meeting of the Committee be referred to the Committee; and that the Petitioners may be heard by themselves, their Counsel and Agents on their Petition against the Bill."

The company alleged in their statement that the Pension Fund was not compulsory upon any servant of the company, and that was so stated in the Bill itself. He was personally intimately acquainted with the facts of one of these funds, where the same provision was supposed to exist that contribution was not compulsory; but members of the fund concerned—he was not speaking of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company, for he did not know how that might be—but members of the fund had assured him that though it was not supposed to be compulsory, in fact it was so. The company also stated that the railway servants had not claimed the right to be represented by petition before the Committee; but the fact was, they had not the right, and to obtain the right was the object of the present Motion; and, should the Motion be carried, they would present their petition to-morrow, which was the last day for doing so. The company also said that the question of the right of such bodies to be heard on petition had been considered by the House, and a Standing Order had been passed upon it. This was the Standing Order to which allusion had been made by the Leader of the Opposition; that Standing Order was amended last Session to allow the Miners' Federation, and other bodies, to be heard on petition. He confessed he thought it was right that the House should take one step at a time. That Amendment was in the nature of an experiment; but surely the time had come for an extension of that experiment, and this was an occasion when that extension could very properly be made. In any case, this was an opposed Bill, and the granting of this Motion would not make the difference between an opposed and an unopposed Bill; the addition of one more petition would not add to the cost of the Bill to any great extent. It was the case with regard to some of these pension funds that, though a man left the service under circumstances that entitled him to a good character, he was not entitled to take out the money he had paid into the fund. This was a statement literally accurate as regards some of these funds; and there was at the time a railway man within the walls of the House who had been so treated, after contributing to the fund for many years. One of the points upon which a *locus standi* was urgently desired arose on the clause on page 27 of the Bill. It was provided that five officials of the company—the chairman, the general manager, the secretary, the chief engineer, and the chief mechanical engineer of the company—should prepare a scheme, and the clause was in words previously used in other Acts of this description. This committee of five would determine the circumstances under which any person who had been a contributor should cease to be entitled to participate in the benefit thereof, and what portion, if any, of his payments he should be entitled to receive. It was important that the representatives of the servants of the company should be heard on a clause of this kind. Such a clause in similar words in previous Acts had been interpreted to mean that a man leaving the society should not withdraw any part of the money invested. There was strong ground for allowing the men to be heard on the constitution of a committee to make such rules. On Section 26 there arose a question such as had not arisen in previous Bills. The Registrar General of Friendly Societies had made a Report in the strongest possible terms on this clause. His Report was not before the House, but it must come before the Committee. Such Report, however, coming before a Committee on an opposed Bill, where the opposition was upon other grounds, was not usually very fully dealt with, the Committee looking rather to other grounds of opposition than to these Departmental Reports. By the kindness of the promoters of the Bill he had been allowed to see this Report. In language unusually strong for such a document, the Chief Registrar condemned the clause; and it was only right that such a Report should be supported by evidence before the Committee. His main objection to the clause was, that it empowered the company to use money compulsorily contributed for purposes other than that for which it had been deducted from the men's wages. On page 31 would be found a repeal of Section 53 of a previous Act obtained by the Company. Upon this the Chief Registrar said that this section had been adopted by both Houses of Parliament, after very great care had been given to the matter. It was the action of the late Chairman of Committees that led to very careful consideration being given to the matter. The company had offered the omission words in the clause, but still the effect would be to virtually repeal the section in the other Act. These were the grounds upon which the society strongly urged that they might be allowed to be heard; and therefore he made the Motion.

Sir Charles Dilke.

Mr. LOUGH seconded the Motion, which anyone who would look at the clauses of the Bill must admit was a most reasonable Motion. His right hon. Friend had drawn attention to the clause which constituted the committee to have control of the fund, and it would be seen that the men had no representation at all. Yet the Bill invested that committee with powers of a far-reaching character. This committee was to decide if contributions should be compulsory or not, who should be excluded from participation in the benefits of the fund, whether a man should recover any of his payments into the fund on leaving, or whether his representative should recover the balance on the death of a contributor. These were surely matters upon which the men should be heard.

Mr. THOMAS FIELDEN (Lancashire, Middleton) said, in reference to the speech from the right hon. Baronet that he really could not see what injury it was proposed to inflict on railway servants by the Bill. They were to be allowed to invest money at 4 per cent., and he failed to see where the injury came in. Personally he should be pleased to invest at such a rate. He was afraid the right hon. Baronet had got his information from Mr. Harford, who did not represent more than one-tenth of the railway servants.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE said that was not so. He had been asked by the Amalgamated Society to oppose these Bills, and he had carefully looked into the matter.

MR. FIELDEN said he would not detain the House, but they had heard some extraordinary statements, which he certainly could not accept.

*SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT remarked that the Chairman of Committees on the last Bill said he could not see how the railway servants could be injuriously affected by it, and he made that his strong ground for opposing the Resolution. The right hon. Gentleman also said that the previous Bill did not operate compulsorily upon the servants of the company. He would ask the right hon. Gentleman's attention to the Bill now before the House. First of all this scheme was to be framed by a committee of five persons—the chairman, the general manager, the secretary, the chief engineer, and the chief mechanical engineer of the company. Such committee by a majority could determine what class of servants of the company should be entitled to contribute: therefore the fund was not open to all, but only to such classes as the majority of this committee decided should have the benefit of it. ["Hear, hear!"] Besides determining who were to participate in the benefits of the fund, and what length of service was to entitle a participation, the committee were also to decide "to what extent such contributions shall be obligatory upon them."

MR. W. J. GALLOWAY (Manchester, S.W.) pointed out that the promoters of the Bill had agreed to withdraw this clause, together with a further section, which stated "it shall not be compulsory on any servants of the company 18 years of age and upwards to become a member of the fund," and which, it was thought, might have made it appear compulsory for those under 18 to do so.

*SIR W. HARCOURT observed that no intimation of such a withdrawal had reached those representing the men until that moment. ["Hear, hear!"] The committee had also the power of saying what, if anything, should disqualify any servant of the company from becoming a contributor to the fund for the purpose of participating in its benefits. That was a power given to the committee to act against any individual, and it was to prevent operations of such an invidious character that the Amalgamated Society existed. ["Hear, hear!"] Again they were to say "under what circumstances any person having been a contributor to the fund shall cease to be entitled to the benefits thereof." That was to say, a man might have gone on for years contributing to the fund and, contrary to the principles of any decent insurance office nowadays, there was no surrender value to be given to him; while, if he gave offence to his employers, this committee had power to declare that, though he had contributed for years, he might receive nothing. Was it fair the men should be left in this situation? [*Cheers.*] Another section gave the committee power to say "what proportion, if any, of the sums contributed by any person or by the company to the fund shall be payable to his representative in the event of his dying before he becomes entitled to a pension or retiring allowance or gratuity." That was to say they had absolute uncontrolled discretion if a man died, from any cause, before he became entitled to a pension to determine whether any or what amount should be given to his family or representatives. Surely this was eminently a scheme as to which the men were entitled to be heard. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. GALLOWAY said he was not a director of the company, but he had taken great interest in the Bill. From the speech he had just delivered the Leader of the Opposition appeared to have misunderstood the whole purpose for which the railway company had promoted the Bill. He should like to put the exact facts before the House. This great railway company was debarred by statute from giving any allowance to its old servants who had served it well in the past but were unable to work any longer, and it asked the House to confer that power upon it. In his opinion that was a most generous proposal, yet hon. Members opposite said it was a scheme by which the company were going to tyrannise over their men, and do them endless harm. The right hon. Gentleman said the committee of five gentlemen appointed under the scheme would have power to do certain things which would be disadvantageous to the men. They would have no power to do anything of the kind. ["Hear, hear!"] All they would have power to do would be to draw up a scheme, which would then be submitted to the men, who could themselves decide whether they liked it or not. ["Hear, hear!"] The men were to be fully and adequately represented on the committee, a concession, he ventured to think, greater than any other railway company had ever given in connection with a Bill of this kind. ["Hear, hear!"] To assert that the committee could do anything unjust to the men was, therefore, to assert that which the Bill did not permit. As to the portions of the Bill which he had stated were withdrawn, he might say that the company had never desired from the beginning that the scheme should be compulsory, although it was offered to every class. If the right hon. Gentleman thought the Bill did not carry out that intention, he submitted that the proper way to secure Amendment would be in Committee. ["Hear, hear!"]

*Sir W. HARCOURT: We think the persons interested should be there when the Amendments are made.

Mr. GALLOWAY observed that the right hon. Gentleman had objected to the committee having power to say under what circumstances any person having been a contributor to the fund should cease to participate in the benefits, and had said that they might by this clause punish a man who had displeased his employers. That was not the intention of the clause at all, and the whole scheme, as he had said, would be submitted to the men for approval. This particular clause had been inserted so that there might be some provision for dealing with the case of men who had been convicted of felony or any gross misconduct of that kind, and convicted, not by the company themselves, but by a Court of Law. As to the provision giving the committee the power to decide what proportion, if any, of the sums contributed by any person to the fund should be payable in the event of death before he became entitled to a pension, he urged that that was a most generous arrangement on the part of the company. They said that in the event of a man ceasing to be employed in their service, whether because he was dismissed for misconduct or because he wished to cease his contributions, or because he had removed, he should have returned to him the whole of his subscriptions, plus 4 per cent. on his money during the time he had subscribed. A more generous proposal could not be made.

*Sir W. HARCOURT: That is not in the Bill.

Mr. GALLOWAY said that the right hon. Gentleman did not seem to realise that this was a scheme which the committee was to draw up and submit to the men, who could take it or leave it as they liked. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Forest of Dean had stated that the Registrar of Friendly Societies had made a strong Report against this Bill. No doubt the Report referred to had been made, and the contention which the Registrar advanced deserved serious consideration. But it was obvious to anybody who had had experience of friendly societies and knew the difficulties of starting a lodge, that the benefits which this fund offered were infinitely superior to anything which a friendly society could offer. ["Hear, hear!" *and* "No!"] He had inquired the feeling of lodges—he was a member of many lodges—and he knew of no lodge which could afford, except by much higher contributions than were proposed in this Bill, to give the same benefits as would be given by the present proposal. He ventured to think the suggestion of the Chief Registrar that if the company only wanted to help their servants they could establish a friendly society, would inflict serious injury, because, in the first place, the men themselves had no desire to establish a friendly society, as it would entail considerable time, and be of doubtful result, and, in the second place, no friendly society could offer the same benefits as a society to which a company added largely by generous donations While the officials of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants might possibly be against this Bill, their opinion was not shared by the men, who took a very different view. The hon. Member here read the following extracts from a letter which he stated he had received from a man who had been employed by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company for 20 years as a signalman:—

> "On reading your speech in this morning's *Manchester Courier*, *re* the Druids, etc., I was pleased to see you were going to support the Bill *re* Old Age Pensions, which my Company, the L. and Y. Railway Co., are promoting on behalf of their servants. I have been in their employ above 20 years, as a signalman, and of course, as you know, we are a class of servants that have not got any big wages, £1 6s. per week was the highest paid in this district till the last two years; now £1 8s. is the top price, so that it has not given us any opportunity to provide for old age. I hope and trust all Members of the Unionist Party will support the Bill, as I have not heard one word from any members of the staff of any department against it, but just the reverse. I am a member of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, but this matter has not been brought before the members in any shape to ask their opinion. Therefore I say Mr. Harford has no right to oppose the Bill till it has been submitted to the members of the Society."

["Hear, hear!"] In view of the fact that the men had generally approved of the scheme, and that it was not a compulsory proposal, he thought the House would be taking upon itself a very serious responsibility if it accepted the Instruction. ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. GEORGE HARWOOD (Bolton) said that many proposals might be made with the best possible intentions, but yet might contain elements prejudicial to those they were meant to serve. The first question for the House to consider was whether these particular conditions should be allowed to go unquestioned before the Committee. Was it right to deny the men the opportunity of putting their objections before the Committee? The right hon. Gentleman who moved the Instruction must have convinced the House that there was a fair ground for a case being stated before the Committee. The only other question to consider was who should have the right to state the case of the men. It might be said that the Amalgamated Society did not represent the majority of railway servants, but was there anyone else better qualified to do so? In the absence of any evidence of a *locus standi* being given to anyone else, he should vote in favour of its being given to that Society. ["Hear, hear!"]

***The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS** said that his first objection to the course proposed was that this clause to which objection was taken was entirely a voluntary clause. The scheme was to be prepared by a Committee and submitted for approval or rejection to the servants of the company. He did not see, therefore, how the men could be injuriously affected. It was obvious that if the company wished to make the scheme a success, as he presumed they did, they would offer the very best terms they could to the men. It was also indisputable that the scheme could not be altered by the Committee when it was once submitted and approved. It could only be altered by the managing committee, on which there would be representatives of the men. His second objection was that in this matter it was sought to go behind the Standing Orders of the House. If it were the deliberate policy of the House—and he expressed no opinion upon that policy—that trade unions should be represented in Committees upstairs to oppose Bills by which they thought their members might be injuriously affected, that policy ought to be stated openly and fairly and frankly, either by a fresh Standing Order or by an Amendment of the present Standing Order. If the course now proposed were adopted, whilst a certain number of associations were compelled, under the Standing Orders, to go before the *locus standi* court and show that they represented the court and show that they represent the interest they claimed to represent, and that that interest was affected by the Bill, in this case this particular society would be singled out and given a *locus* without having to go through the mill like other societies. ["Hear, hear!"] It was most important to note that it appeared from the letter just read that the officials of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants had never consulted their members on the subject. The House, by assenting to this Instruction, would be giving a *locus standi* to the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants to oppose a Bill of which many members of the Society were in favour. In these circumstances he should vote against the Instruction.

Mr. J. BURNS maintained that the Chairman of Committees had no right to say that the Amalgamated Society of

Railway Servants had been given no authority to intervene in this matter. 44,000 men had been discussing this Bill and similar Bills in their branches and newspapers, and had specifically authorised their representatives to oppose the particular plan under consideration. The Chairman of Committees said that it would be invidious to give a single society a *locus standi*, and to deny it to others. The way out of that difficulty was to allow other societies who had a *bonâ fide* interest in the Motion to be represented. He thought that the Standing Order, which conferred the right of being heard on Miners and Mining Associations and on Chambers of Agriculture and Commerce, ought to be generously interpreted to include the men who were interested in the subject matter of this Bill, directly and indirectly, and who numbered 100,000. What the men objected to was the proposal that five officials, representing the company, should be empowered to draft the scheme. The men were not to be consulted in the drafting of the scheme, and he ventured to say that the scheme was to be imposed upon the men because they were not free agents in the matter. Even if the scheme drawn up by the officials should be approved by the men and put into operation for 12 months, any scratch meeting of the shareholders, a certain number being present, would be able to turn the scheme upside down, and break up their Pension Fund. These were not the conditions under which the Oddfellows, the Foresters, and Hearts of Oak did business. They were not subject to the capricious whims of directors. He traversed the statements of the hon. Member who had spoken for the railway company. To withdraw Sub-section A would not be consistent and compatible with other Sub-sections. He declined to accept the hon. Member's statement with regard to the generosity of this railway company. To the Insurance Fund of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway the members contributed £11,000 in the half-year, while the company contributed only £750. This lack of generosity in respect of accident insurance did not encourage a belief that the company would be very generous in assisting the Pension Fund. He would refer to the Return of the London and North Western Railway Company in these matters, and give a few figures—

*Mr. SPEAKER said that the hon. Member appeared to him about to discuss details which it would be more appropriate for a Committee upstairs to consider.

Mr. BURNS said that the fact that these details could not be discussed in that House showed how necessary it was that the representatives of the railway servants should be heard before the Committee. Under the circumstances of the case, the railway company could not provide anything like the same pensions as were provided by the Oddfellows, the Foresters, and Hearts of Oak. If these societies were allowed, he believed that they would prove upstairs that this proposed Pension Fund was an insidious attempt to impair railway thrift and to damage good friendly societies.

Mr. ROBERT ASCROFT (Oldham) believed that the railway company was acting with entirely good motives. He also believed that the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants were acting in the interests of the members. If a hearing were given to the representatives of the men, their only object would be to amend two clauses of the Bill, so that any scheme proposed by the railway company might be brought up to date, and rendered satisfactory to the Registrar of Friendly Societies. It had been said that the scheme would not be settled by Parliament or by a Committee, but would be settled entirely by the directors and responsible managers. In those circumstances he could not see that there would be anything wrong or unfair in allowing the men's representatives to appear before the Committee. There were cases in which it was absolutely necessary for that House to depart from usual custom, and, in his opinion, this was one of them.

Mr. J. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesbrough) asserted that this question had been thrashed out in every branch of the Amalgamated Railway Servants' Association, and that all the branches were absolutely opposed to this arrangement. The Bill would give the managers and officials of the railway company power to draft the scheme. If the company were itself providing the funds there would be very little objection to the plan. But they were asking the men to provide the money, whilst they claimed the right to pay it out as they might think proper. [*Cries of* "No!"] The company was afraid of hearing the opinion of the railway servants upon this question. If they were not afraid they would not object to the representatives of the men being heard before the Committee. Every section of the community that would be affected by proposed legislation had a right to be heard before such legislation was added to the Statute Book. He should, therefore, vote for the Instruction.

The House divided:—Ayes, 176; Noes, 212.—(Division List, No. 76.)

QUESTIONS.

SUCK DRAINAGE AWARD.

MR. JAMES O'KELLY (Roscommon, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will state the number of decrees granted by the County Court Judge of Roscommon under the Suck Drainage Award; the amount of the decrees in each case, and the rent of each holding on which these decrees were given, and the observations of the County Court Judge in giving his decision on these cases; in how many cases the decrees have been realised, and the amount and costs paid without the intervention of the Sheriff; and the number of cases where the sheriff has executed the writ of *fi fa.*, together with his costs?

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (MR. R. W. HANBURY, Preston): The number of decrees is 382. To state the amount and rent in each case would be obviously impossible within the ordinary limits of an answer to a Question on the Paper. I understand that the County Court Judge made some remarks about some inaccuracies in the documents and about the absence of the process server who should prove service. The decrees settled without the Sheriff's intervention have been 239 under £2, with costs 6s. 9d. each and 7 over £2, with costs 13s each. 136 decrees have been lodged with the Sheriff. Of these, 87 under £2 have been realised, with costs 8s. 3d. each, 9 over £2, with costs 14s. 6d each, and 3 over £10, with costs £1. 4s. 6d. each.

MR. D. KILBRIDE (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will state the number of decrees granted by the County Court Judge of Galway under the Suck Drainage Award; the amount of the decrees in each case and the rent of each holding on which these decrees were given, and the observations of the County Court Judge in giving his decision on these cases; in how many cases the decrees have been realised and the amount and costs paid without the intervention of the Sheriff; and the number of cases where the Sheriff has executed the writ of *fi fa.*, together with his costs?

*MR. HANBURY: The number of decrees is 499. Here again, to state the amount and rent in each case would be obviously impossible within the ordinary limits of an answer to a Question on the Paper. I understand that the Recorder made no observations at any of the Sessions. The decrees settled without the Sheriff's intervention have been 173 under £2, with costs 6s. 9d. each, and 16 over £2, with costs 13s. each. 310 decrees have been lodged with the Sheriff. Of these, 151 under £2 have been realised, with costs 8s. 3d. each, and 7 over £2, with costs 14s. 6d. each.

MR. KILBRIDE: Am I to understand from the reply that about half the number of decrees have been realised?

*MR. HANBURY: Yes; 158 out of 310.

PRINTING AND STATIONERY CONTRACTS.

MR. W. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the Departmental Committee, which was appointed last Session to advise the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office regarding the issuing of printing and stationery contracts, in accordance with the findings of the Select Committee, has made its report to the Treasury, and whether its publication as a Parliamentary Paper will be sanctioned?

*MR. HANBURY: Yes, Sir. The Committee of which my hon. Friend the

Member for East Donegal was Chairman sent in its Report last September, and the Report shall be presented to Parliament as the hon. Member suggests.

GAMBLING IN "OPTIONS AND FUTURES."

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has any intention of proposing legislative measures for prohibiting or restricting gambling in option or future contracts representing fictitious agricultural produce and metals; whether he is aware of what is being done in this direction by other countries; whether Her Majesty's Government have asked the Hungarian Government for a copy of the official Report of the International Agricultural Congress, held at Budapest last September, and whether he would lay upon the Table the section of the Canada Criminal Code of 1892, which came into operation in March 1893, prohibiting gambling in prices?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. C. T. RITCHIE, Croydon): No, Sir, I do not propose to introduce legislation on the subject referred to by the hon. Member. If there is any particular country of whose action in the matter the hon. Member desires to be informed, I will endeavour to ascertain the information for him. A copy of the official Report of the International Congress held at Budapest has been asked for. and we are informed that it is in the press. If the hon. Member will move for the sections of the Canada Code to which he refers, there will be no objection to them laying on the Table.

PRIVATE ASYLUMS.

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Government will consider the advisability of the suppression of private asylums, and make other and more suitable provision for paying patients?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY, Lancashire, Blackpool): No, Sir, I am not aware of any sufficient reason for disturbing the arrangement made only six years ago by Parliament with regard to licensed houses.

Secretary to the Treasury.

MADAGASCAR.

MR. WILLIAM JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if his attention has been called to a statement, published by the London Missionary Society, concerning the terrible straits to which the Protestant natives of Madagascar are reduced since the conquest of the Island by the French Republic; that at least 20 Protestant places of worship have been taken possession of by the Roman Catholics with the sanction of French officers; and that Protestants are threatened and ill-treated on the ground that British missionaries are their friends; and, whether the British Government will endeavour to secure the liberty and property of the Protestants according to the assurances given to Lord Salisbury at the time of the French expedition to Madagascar?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. G. CURZON, Lancashire, Southport): I have seen the statements as to the Protestant natives of Madagascar, and can assure the hon. Member that the position of British missions and of British subjects generally in Madagascar is receiving the earnest attention of Her Majesty's Government, who are about to address representations to the French Government on the subject. ["Hear, hear!"]

TELEPHONE SERVICE.

MR. A. GRIFFITH-BOSCAWEN (Kent, Tunbridge): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he has received an answer from the Town Council of Tunbridge Wells respecting the letter from the National Telephone Company on the alleged insufficiency of the local telephone service, stating that, notwithstanding the changes made, there is still a lack of secresy so that subscribers' conversations can be overheard; that the Corporation declares the service inadequate; that there are only four call offices in the borough — three of these not properly equipped; that the rentals are unduly high; and that altogether there are less than 80 subscribers, being fewer than there were in 1895; whether he is aware that, in the event of a licence being given under the Treasury Minute of 23rd May 1892, a local company could be formed which would be prepared to establish and work an exchange at a much lower rate, and that 140 residents have already promised to join as subscribers; and whether, in the interests of the town, he will grant such a licence?

*Mr. HANBURY: Yes, Sir. An answer has been received, and I am aware of the representations which have been made; but the Government are not prepared to entertain the application for a licence to a local company at Tunbridge Wells. As far as can be seen at present, the National Company are using their best endeavours to render their service efficient, and should they fail to render it efficient, the Postmaster General will carefully consider what steps it may be desirable for him to take.

Mr. GRIFFITH-BOSCAWEN: Arising out of that, may I ask whether the Postmaster General will institute an Inquiry into the alleged inefficiency of the service at Tunbridge Wells?

*Mr. HANBURY: I gather that the Postmaster General will be willing to make inquiries whether the service is efficient or not.

Mr. ALEXANDER CROSS (Glasgow, Camlachie): Will the right hon. Gentleman inquire into the charges made by the telephone company, as well as the inefficiency of service?

*Mr. HANBURY: Yes; I consider that part of the general Question.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he is now in a position to state the general policy of the Government on the question of telephones, and their management and administration in this country?

Mr. A. D. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars): Before the right hon. Gentleman replies, I wish to ask him a Question, of which I have given him private notice, namely: As notice of his intention to make a statement regarding the Government policy on the Telephone question was recently made, will he consent to postpone doing so until Thursday next, to allow representations to be placed before him on this subject by the Telephone Committee of the Glasgow Municipal Corporation, which meets to-morrow for the purpose of preparing them, and which are necessary on account of statements recently made in Glasgow to the Statute (Labour) Committee of the Corporation by the hon. Member for North-East Manchester, formerly Postmaster General?

*Mr. HANBURY: I do not think the Corporation of Glasgow will be in any way prejudiced by my answer. In reply to the hon. Member, I have no change of policy to announce. Her Majesty's Government do not propose to take any steps to acquire, either by compulsion or agreement, the business of the National Telephone Company, which, as the hon. Member is aware, is conducted under a temporary licence from the Government. But the Postmaster General will carefully inquire into any complaints which he may receive from any locality of the inefficiency or inadequacy of the service which the company is supplying, and should he consider that such complaints are well founded, and that the inefficiency or inadequacy of the service is due to the fault or neglect of the company, he will carefully consider, on the merits of each case, what steps it may be desirable to take to remedy the defect.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON: Do I understand that in 1911 the Government policy is, in taking over the whole telephone service of this country, that they will not recognise any claim for "going value" or "unearned increment" made or to be made by the National Telephone Company?

*Mr. HANBURY: My hon. Friend will understand by the answer I gave the other day that the Government stand by the answer given in Mr. Arnold Morley's letter, supposing this purchase is not made before the licence expires. The Government can give no guarantee what will happen or what the successors of the present Government may do. At all events, we are not prepared to purchase.

Mr. JAMES McKILLOP (Stirlingshire): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether his attention has been called to the frequent and strong complaints made from the industrial districts of East Stirlingshire and the Coatbridge Districts of Lanarkshire with reference to the inefficient service of the National Telephone Company; and what steps are being taken to remedy a state of things so detrimental to the trade and requirements of these districts?

*MR. HANBURY: The Postmaster General has not had his attention called to any inefficiency in the service of the National Telephone Company in the districts referred to by the hon Member.

LIBERATOR GROUP OF COMPANIES.

MR. RICHARD MARTIN (Worcester, Droitwich): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the assets of the Liberator Building Society, the House and Lands Investment Trust, and the Lands Allotment Company were transferred in July 1895, to the United Realisation Company by order of the Bankruptcy Court; whether the fees payable thereon to, and claimed by, the Board of Trade have been ascertained; and, if so, what is the amount thereof; if not, if he can state any reason for the exceptional delay, and whether the fees include the expenses of the special manager appointed and of the staff employed by him?

MR. RITCHIE: The scheme under which the assets of the Companies mentioned were sold to the United Realisation Company was sanctioned by the Court on 22nd June 1895, but, owing to objections raised by that Company, the transfer of the various properties has not yet been completed. The final settlement of the fees due to the Board of Trade has been a matter of considerable difficulty, owing to the complicated nature of the transactions. It is now awaiting the completion of certain accounts by the United Realisation Company. The fees chargeable will be exclusive of the expenses of the Special manager and his staff.

MANCHESTER REGIMENT (2ND VOLUNTEER BATTALION).

*MR. J. W. MACLURE (Lancashire, Stretford): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War when it is intended to appoint the new Adjutant for the 2nd Volunteer Battalion of the Manchester Regiment?

Mr. J. McKillop.

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): The appointment will be made as soon as a suitable candidate can be found. No officer in the territorial regiment is available at this moment.

LAND COMMISSION (FAIR RENTS).

MR. EDWARD CARSON (Dublin University): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that the Land Commission in Ireland have purported to fix fair rents in a number of cases without specifying the details required by the schedule enacted in the Act of last year; and, if so, in how many cases this has occurred; whether Her Majesty's Court of Appeal has decided that such details are necessary, and that the omission of them invalidates the orders; what course the Land Commission intend to take with reference to cases in which such omission has occurred; and whether there is any power of awarding costs against the Land Commission in appeals taken to rectify such omissions; if not, how the costs are borne?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds, Central): I am afraid I must ask my hon. and learned Friend to defer this Question until to-morrow.

MR. D. MACALEESE (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will explain the cause of the delay in giving decisions in the land cases which were heard at Lisnaskea, County Fermanagh, on the 2nd of January last; why the Sub-Commissioners have not as yet inspected the holdings of those tenants whose cases were heard at Clones, County Monaghan, on the 5th and 6th of February; how many cases in the counties of Fermanagh and Monaghan in which the originating notices to have fair rents fixed were served before the 1st of last November have not as yet been listed for hearing; and when will there be another sitting of the Sub-Commissioners to hear these cases; and whether it is intended to appoint additional Sub-Commissioners so as to prevent an accumulation of arrears of business and to dispose speedily of cases in which notices to have fair rents fixed have been served?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: It is necessary to make local inquiries in reference to the first and second paragraphs of the Question, and I would ask the hon. Member to postpone it until Thursday next.

MONEY ORDERS (FRIENDLY SOCIETIES).

Mr. F. A. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether consideration has been given to the complaints of the Friendly Societies, that they are seriously prejudiced by the raising of the charge of money orders under £1 from 2d. to 3d.; that the number of orders under £1 for contributions of members and for sick pay is enormous in the year, and the loss from the extra 1d. in the Hearts of Oak Society alone is estimated at £11,000 a year; and, whether the Postmaster General will, in view of the discouragement to thrift caused by the charge, reduce the rate for sums under £1 to 2d.

*Mr. HANBURY: I must refer the hon. Member to the answer which I gave on the 23rd ultimo to the hon. Members for South Somerset and the Leominster Division of Herefordshire. But I may add that the hon. Member is mistaken in supposing that the loss from the extra 1d. in the Hearts of Oak Society alone is estimated at £11,000 a year. As a matter of fact the difference between 2d. and 3d. on all orders for £1 and under issued by the Post Office does not reach that sum, and the Hearts of Oak Society only takes out a proportion of the orders.

VOLUNTEER OFFICER (COURT OF INQUIRY).

Colonel DENNY (Kilmarnock Burghs): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War if an officer in the Volunteer force has a right to call for a Court of Inquiry, in the event of his services being dispensed with, or being requested to resign his commission?

*Mr. BRODRICK: A Court of Inquiry may be convened by the Officer Commanding any body of troops to take and report evidence when an investigation of facts appears to him desirable. Such a court has no judicial power, and can express no opinion on the conduct of any officer or soldier. No officer of any section of Her Majesty's forces has the right to demand a Court of Inquiry.

METROPOLITAN POLICE (BOOT CONTRACT).

*Captain NORTON (Newington, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the last issue of contract boots to the members of the Metropolitan Police Force is to be in April next and the first weekly issue of boot money in October, thus calling upon each man to advance the value of a pair of boots to the authorities.

Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: The dates are correctly stated in the Question, but the inference which the hon. Member draws from them is wrong. The April issue of boots with those already in the men's possession will in all probability last beyond the time when the men will have received by weekly allowance the cost of a new pair: and they will not be called upon to procure a new pair until one of those pair has been condemned. The dates I should add are those which were mentioned to the men when the choice between the two systems was given them.

*Captain NORTON: Am I to gather from the answer that the men will practically be defrauded of a pair of boots? [*Laughter.*]

Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: Quite the contrary, Sir.

*Captain NORTON: If the boots are made to last longer than they have hitherto lasted, are not the men thereby defrauded out of a certain amount of shoe leather? [*Laughter.*]

[No answer was given.]

CONTRABAND TOBACCO.

*Captain NORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he can state the amount of contraband tobacco confiscated by the Customs during last year, and how it was disposed of?

*Mr. HANBURY: The quantity of contraband tobacco in various forms confiscated by the Customs during the year ending the 31st December 1896 was 6,987 lbs. This quantity being collected in the Queen's warehouse in London served to increase the stock of seized tobacco already accumulated there, and from this stock the undermentioned quantities were distributed during the year in question.

	lbs.
Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum	1,117
Dundrum Criminal Lunatic Asylum	920
Kew Gardens	3,360
Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh	336
Delivered to the War Department for the use of troops ordered on Foreign service	2,612
Total	8,345

INSANE (SUICIDE RETURN).

Mr. WILLIAM CORBET (Wicklow, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give a Return for the year 1896 of the insane who committed suicide (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 298, of Session 1896)?

Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: I am not aware that any useful purpose would be served by continuing the Return which was granted the hon. Member last year; and as it proved a very troublesome one to prepare, I am afraid I must decline to agree to it. The number of persons generally who committed suicide will, of course, appear in the Judicial Statistics in the ordinary way.

QUEEN'S REIGN (COLONIAL TROOPS).

Mr. J. F. HOGAN (Tipperary, Mid): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether he can state the arrangements that have been made for the reception and quartering of the Colonial troops visiting England in connection with the celebration of Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee; will an effort be made to concentrate, as far as practicable, the various Colonial contingents; and would it be possible to set apart the whole of one of the London barracks for their accommodation?

*Mr. BRODRICK: The arrangements for the reception of the contingents of Colonial troops are under consideration. The details cannot yet be stated.

ARMY PENSIONER (PATRICK HANLEY).

Mr. O'KELLY: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the case of Patrick Hanley, of Derrymoglan, County Roscommon, who was in the 88th Regiment for nearly five years, served in the Indian Mutiny, being present in many engagements, including Cawnpore, Lucknow, and Calpee, and received four wounds, two from bullets, a sabre wound and also a wound on the left leg which, owing to some mistake, was not recorded, although it was the most severe and painful one; is he aware that Patrick Hanley was discharged as unfit for further service, and granted the sum of 8d. per day for life, and that he is now over 60 years of age and no longer able to work; and whether, under the circumstances, the War Office will consider the desirability of increasing this old soldier's pension?

*Mr. BRODRICK: The case of Patrick Hanley will be referred to the Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital for their consideration.

COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON EDUCATION.

Mr. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Notts, Mansfield): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, if he will inform the House who are the members of that Committee?

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Sir John Gorst, Cambridge University): The members of the Committee of Council are the Lord President of the Council, the Marquess of Salisbury, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, the Secretary of State for the Colonies—[*laughter*]—the Secretary of State for War, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the First Lord of the Admiralty—[*renewed laughter*]—and the Vice President. [*Much laughter.*]

Mr. CARVELL WILLIAMS: May I ask whether this Committee ever meets?

Sir J. GORST: I cannot answer that Question without notice—[*laughter*]—and I doubt even with notice if I should be allowed to disclose the proceedings of a Committee of the Privy Council. [*Renewed laughter.*]

INDIAN FAMINE.

Mr. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he is in a position to inform the House, having regard to the large sums of public money now being expended in India in relief works, if the Government of India are carrying forward irrigation works of importance in the parts of India now affected by famine for the mitigation or prevention of subsequent scarcity of food in those districts in the future?

The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Lord George Hamilton, Middlesex, Ealing): In addition to the minor irrigation works which have been recently undertaken in relief of famine, the Government of India are engaged in the construction of very considerable irrigation projects, averaging a capital expenditure of three-quarters of a crore of rupees per annum up to the year 1900. These projects will largely afford protection in the future to the parts now affected by famine, besides affording similar relief in portions of India which have not been affected on this occasion.

CRETE.

Mr. JAMES BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can state if it is a part of the scheme for the autonomy of Crete that the Governor shall be a Christian, shall be appointed by or with the consent of the Powers, and shall not be removable by the Sultan?

*Mr. CURZON: It is impossible for us to pledge the other Powers to any course until their decision has been arrived at. The questions raised by the right hon. Gentleman are very important, but they have not yet been determined.

Mr. BRYCE asked whether the Under Secretary could indicate when he would be able to make a statement on the subject?

*Mr. CURZON: No, Sir; I am afraid I cannot.

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it is the case that the reinforcement of Candanos and other Turkish garrisons in Crete was prevented, while the proposal, assented to by all the other Great Powers, to prohibit the importation of arms and volunteers for the insurgent forces was rejected by Her Majesty's Government, and what steps have been taken to effect the rescue of the troops and the loyal population whose lives are consequently in jeopardy?

*Mr. CURZON: In neither case is there any foundation for the statements advanced in the Question as to the action of Her Majesty's Government. On the contrary, the Admirals have acted in perfect accord throughout, and concerted efforts, the nature of which I have already communicated to the House, are being made to rescue the blockaded Mussulmans at Candanos.

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER: Do I understand my right hon. Friend to say that there is no truth in the paragraph which refers to the refusal of Her Majesty's Government to assent to the Austrian proposals in August last?

*Mr. CURZON: I have said that neither statement in the first part of the Question is true.

Mr. JOHN DILLON (Mayo, E.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman a Question—of which I have given him private notice—namely, whether there is any truth in the statement in to-day's paper that a joint force has been landed with orders to proceed to Candanos, and to use force if there is resistance on the part of the insurgents?

*Mr. CURZON: That is not the Question of which the hon. Gentleman gave me private notice. I have a long Question from him here of a very different character. [*Laughter and cheers*]

Mr DILLON: I gave the right hon. Gentleman private notice of two Questions, and possibly he may be able to answer this Question now as arising out of his answer? [*Cries of* "No!"]

*MR. CURZON: I will answer the whole Question later on, if the hon. Gentleman will permit me.

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): Is it not a fact that it is established by the Blue-book that the Powers prevented the dispatch to Crete of four battalions out of five sent by the Turkish Government?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member will not be in order in asking what is established by the Blue-book.

MR. T. W. LEGH (Lancashire, Newton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he is able to give any further information respecting the Mussulmans besieged in Candanos?

*MR. CURZON: From reports which have been received from Her Majesty's Consul at Canea, and Rear-Admiral Harris, it appears that on the 4th instant Her Majesty's ship *Rodney*, with Her Majesty's Consul on board, left for Selino Castelli with orders to do all that was possible to relieve Candanos, which is situated three hours' journey inland. The Captain of Her Majesty's ship *Scout*, reported on the 6th instant, that Candanos was in no immediate danger, though the Mussulmans were closely blockaded. This is the latest information that we have received.

MR. J. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, in the contemplated arrangement for utilising as police in Crete Turkish soldiery, any, and what precautions will be taken to secure the inhabitants from murder, outrage, and rapine by the proposed Turkish constabulary; whether any inquiry will be made as to the antecedents of the men to be told off on constabulary duty, and whether men who were implicated in the atrocities in Armenia and Constantinople, or were engaged in active service on behalf of the Sultan in the recent disturbances in Crete, will be employed on police duty in Crete; and whether an assurance will be given that inquiry will be made into the antecedents and character of Turkish soldiery undertaking police duties in Crete?

*MR. CURZON: It may be taken for granted that in any future police arrangements which made be made, every precaution will be taken to provide for the security of the inhabitants, and that in recruiting for the Gendarmerie, the fittest men will be selected. We have not heard of the landing of 500 men, nor, of course, can I specify in advance what steps may require to be taken for the relief of the beleaguered Mussulmans at Candanos.

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork, E.): Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether it is intended that this Turkish constabulary shall be under the command of Christian officers?

*MR. CURZON: I can give no detailed information at the present stage of the Question.

MR. MACNEILL: Will the right hon. Gentleman undertake to say that an investigation will be made into the character of the men—[*cries of* "Oh!"]—constituting the Cretan-Turkish police, having regard to the fact that that police was engaged in murdering their officers while he was engaged in praising them in the House of Commons?

*MR. CURZON: The hon. Member is now putting in a slightly different form the Question standing on the Paper which I have already answered. [*Cheers.*]

*SIR W. HARCOURT (Monmouthshire, W.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he will state to the House the terms of the original Note addressed by the Powers to Turkey, and also of the supplementary Note relating to the removal of the Turkish troops from Crete presented on Friday last to the Porte; and whether the Notes addressed to Turkey have been presented in the form of an ultimatum and a fixed term assigned, as in the case of Greece, for the compulsory assent of the Porte to these terms. [*Cheers.*]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): Although it is rather late in the day, I am glad to say that I have at last been able to lay on the Table of the House the two Notes, the Note to Greece and the Note to the Porte, and I have satisfied myself that there are at this moment in the Vote Office as many copies as Gentlemen are likely to ask for. With regard to the second part of the right hon. Gentleman's Question, I have to say that neither the Note to Greece nor the Note to Turkey was in the form of an ultimatum; but there is undoubtedly, as he has pointed out, a difference in the form of the two Notes, which is justified by the fact that Greece was notoriously acting in defiance of, or against the wishes of, the Powers of Europe, while Turkey was purely on the defensive and has shown no desire, so far as we know, to resist in any way the policy which the six Great Powers have agreed upon. ["Hear, hear."]

Mr. J. C. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Will the right hon. Gentleman say why the Notes to which he has referred were not issued simultaneously?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: I don't know.

Mr. DILLON: I wish to ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs what instructions have been given to the mixed forces landed at Selino. Are they to attack the insurgents in case they meet with opposition?

*Mr. CURZON: That, again, is not the Question of which the hon. Gentleman has given me private notice; and I must decline, therefore, to answer. [*Cheers.*]

Sir J. FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.): I hope I may be excused, under the circumstances, for asking my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary a Question of which I have not given him notice—it is, whether any replies have been received to the Collective Notes from the Ottoman or the Greek Governments?

*Mr. CURZON: We have not yet heard.

COMMON JURORS (IRELAND).

Mr. J. P. FARRELL (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received a Copy of a Resolution adopted by the Bawnboy Board of Guardians at their Meeting on 22nd February, advocating payment of expenses to all common jurors in Ireland, and what action is intended to be taken thereon?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: Representations to the effect stated have been received from one or two Boards of Guardians. The Question, obviously, is one which could only be considered in relation to Great Britain and Ireland, and must be dealt with in a general Measure applicable to the Three Kingdoms, if dealt with at all.

WORKMISTRESSES (IRISH NATIONAL SCHOOLS).

Mr. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he can state the number of workmistresses employed in Irish National Schools for the year ending 31st December 1896, how much their remuneration amounted to, and the average per teacher?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: It has not been found possible in the short space of time since this Question was placed on the Paper to ascertain the number of workmistresses employed during the year ended 31st December 1896, but the Commissioners state that at the close of the September quarter of last year the number was 880. The salary of workmistresses (who are not employed for the full school day) was raised in 1886 from £8 to its present rate of £12 a year, and the result fees earned vary from £1 to £2 10s. a year.

CAVAN AND LEITRIM LIGHT RAILWAY.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether any steps are being taken by the Post Office authorities to facilitate an early delivery of letters in Ballyconnell, Bawnboy, and Swanlinbar, by the employment of the Cavan and Leitrim Railway train service?

*Mr. HANBURY: The Post Office is not taking any steps in the matter referred to, for, as stated in the answers given to the hon. Member on the 22nd of June 1896 and 1st of February last, the trains running on the Cavan and Leitrim Railway would not afford so convenient a service to Ballyconnell, Bawnboy, etc., as that afforded by car, and the cost of establishing trains specially for the mails would be altogether beyond what the circumstances would warrant.

POST OFFICE (MOATE-FARRELL, CO. LONGFORD).

Mr. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, can he now state whether a sub-post office will be established at Moate-Farrell, County

Longford, in response to a petition recently presented from the inhabitants of Clonbroney?

*MR. HANBURY: I am happy to say that the result of the inquiry formerly promised has been favourable, and that a sub-post office will shortly be established at Moate-Farrell.

DANISH TRAWLERS (SCOTTISH WATERS).

MR. J. E. GORDON (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the Naval Police have recently reported the presence of Danish trawlers in the protected waters of the Moray Firth; and what steps the Government propose to take in order to uphold the Law and preserve the intention of Parliament?

CAPTAIN PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that a Danish trawler has been constantly fishing for the last few weeks in the Moray Firth; and whether, having regard to the strong feelings aroused amongst those interested, owing to a foreign trawler being able to fish in waters from which British trawlers are excluded, the Government propose to take any steps to prevent the continuance of such a system in the future?

SIR WILLIAM WEDDERBURN (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that a Danish trawler, *Dania*, has been seen by H.M.S. *Jackal* trawling in the Moray Firth within forbidden limits, and that she is about to land her catch at Aberdeen; whether the Government have power to prevent the landing of fish thus caught; and what progress has been made in the negotiations for the revision of the North Sea Convention, so that such trawling may in future be prevented?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire): I will answer the Questions of the hon. Members for the North Division of Aberdeen, Banffshire, and Elgin and Nairn together. On the 28th ultimo the Fishery Board received a report from the Commander of H.M.S. *Jackal* to the effect "that the Danish trawler E. 46 *Dania* was this forenoon discovered seven miles E.N.E. off Tarbetness with her port otter trawl down." In consequence of this and other reports, the Secretary for Scotland has given instructions to the Fishery Board to prevent, under the powers of Section 8 of the Herring Fishery (Scotland) Act of 1889, the landing or sale in Scotland of fish from the *Dania* caught within the area prohibited by their bye-laws. As regards the negotiations for the revision of the North Sea Convention referred to by the hon. Member for Banffshire, I have nothing to add to what has already been stated in this House by the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and myself.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES asked whether there was any power of prohibiting foreign vessels from fishing outside the territorial waters?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE said there was no power of preventing fishing, but if the hon. Member would refer to the section of the Act to which he had referred he would see that there were certain powers to prevent the landing of fish so caught in Scotland.

CAPTAIN PIRIE asked whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that the *Dania* was proceeding to Hull, and whether there were any powers to prevent the landing of such fish there?

*The LORD ADVOCATE said the Act to which he referred related only to Scotland. He knew nothing more about the movements of the *Dania* than what he had stated.

IRISH MAIL SERVICE.

MR. MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether the Postmaster General has received a Resolution unanimously passed on the 8th February at a special meeting of the Commissioners of the borough of Enniskillen, protesting against the delay in the morning mail service, and urging upon the Post Office authorities and the Treasury, as an imperative necessity to meet the requirements of business, that the mails now detained at Dundalk from 7.20 a.m. till 9 a.m. should be dispatched at once by mail train for Cloneen, Bundoran, and Omagh, distributing the letters en route at the different stations; and whether the Postmaster General, having regard to the inconvenience and commercial loss entailed by this delay, will take steps in accordance with the terms of the Resolution?

*MR. HANBURY: The Postmaster General has received a copy of the Resolution referred to. The mails for Enniskillen now reach Dundalk at 8.1 a.m.—not at 7.20 a.m.—and are sent forward by the 8.57 a.m. train. As stated in reply to another hon. Member a few days ago, the question of improving the service will receive attention in connection with the revision of the day mail services now in hand, and the Postmaster General will place before the Great Northern Railway Company the strong desire for improvement which exists, in the hope that the Railway Company may be able to effect the desired improvement which the Post Office would not be justified in carrying out by putting on a special train at public cost. If such an arrangement should be made by the Company, Clones, which it is presumed is intended by Cloneen, is on the way to Enniskillen, and would, of course, participate in any improvement of the service to Enniskillen, but Bundoran, which is a long distance beyond Enniskillen, would, it is feared, be in any case excluded from the advantages. As regards Omagh, the mails do not go viâ Enniskillen but viâ Portadown, and suffer no detention at Dundalk.

WRECK (INDIAN TROOPSHIP "WARREN HASTINGS").

CAPTAIN CHALONER (Wilts, Westbury): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether any Report has been received at the War Office of the circumstances attending the wreck of the *Warren Hastings* on the island of Réunion; and whether the Report can be made public?

*MR. BRODRICK: Reports have been received from the officers commanding the wings of the King's Royal Rifles and the York and Lancaster Regiment and other details on board the *Warren Hastings*, and also from the officer commanding the ship. It appears that the ship got out of her course and struck the rocks soon after 2 o'clock on a pitch-dark night. The troops, numbering over 1,000, were mustered at once, and the captain of the ship reports that but for the perfect discipline observed and the prompt obedience to every order given, many lives must necessarily have been lost. I propose to lay the Reports on the Table, and I think the House will feel that the individual acts of heroism in saving life recorded in them, and the perfect order maintained during the landing of the women and children in darkness with the ship at an angle of 50 deg. and momentarily expected to capsize, are worthy to be recorded in the annals of these regiments and of the British Army. [*Cheers.*]

LABOURERS' DWELLINGS (CO. LONGFORD).

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—(1) whether Messrs. Kelly and Agnew, representing the Local Government Board, inspected labourers' dwellings in the Castlefin and Cloughard Electoral Divisions in County Donegal the year before last; (2) whether a scheme was made for building a number of cottages to replace those condemned as unfit for habitation in each of those divisions; and (3) what is the cause of the delay in erecting them?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The reply to the first paragraph is in the affirmative. A scheme was made for the erection of 13 cottages in the Union, four of which were to be in Cloughard Electoral Division. None were proposed to be built in Castlefin Division, but having regard to the proximity of the sites of the four cottages mentioned to Castlefin Division, that Division and Cloughard Division were combined into one area of charge for the expenses of the scheme so far as it related to those four cottages. I do not understand that there has been any exceptional cause for delay beyond pressure of work on the Inspector, and the fact that the loans originally applied for were found to be insufficient and fresh applications had to be made to the Treasury. All the requisite preliminaries are now practically completed, and the Inspector will advertise for tenders for the erection of the cottages at an early date.

SHANNON SALMON FISHERY.

MR. JAMES ROCHE (Kerry, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Inspectors of Irish Fisheries have been applied to by the Conservators of the

River Shannon to request Her Majesty's Government to place a gunboat on protection duty at the mouth of the River Shannon, as it has been discovered that a French fishing fleet are shooting their mackerel nets within the limit, and in such a manner as to prevent the run of salmon, to the great detriment of the national fishery; and whether he will recommend the Lord Lieutenant to favourably consider such request?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: An application of the nature referred to in the Question was made to the Inspectors of Fisheries, who replied that in the absence of a bye-law prohibiting mackerel fishing there was no ground on which the Inspectors could support the application. It is a fact that French fishing boats annually visit the South West Coast of Ireland and fish for two or three months, but the Inspectors have no evidence before them to show that these vessels fish within territorial limits.

CAPTAIN DONELAN asked whether it was the fact that these French fishing boats had not the right to come within a distance of three miles of the shore?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR said he believed that was so; what he had stated was that the Inspector had no evidence that they did come within that distance of the shore.

SUPREME COURT
(REVISION OF RULES).

MR. L. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.): I beg to ask the Attorney General whether the revision of the Rules of the Supreme Court is now complete; when the Rules are likely to be issued; and whether the whole of the Revised Rules will be issued at one time or by instalments?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): I am informed that the revision is not complete, and it is not possible to say when it will be complete, as there are still many points to be considered. But the Rules will probably be issued in sections, and some important alterations will be made.

VOLUNTARY (NECESSITOUS) SCHOOLS.

MR. SAMUEL EVANS (Glamorgan, Mid): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Education Department or the Treasury have any list or statistics of the Voluntary Schools which are considered to be "necessitous schools," with the amounts estimated to be required to relieve the necessity of such schools; and whether the amount of the aid grant of £616,000, proposed to be paid by Parliament under the Voluntary Schools Bill, has been based on, or fixed in accordance with, any such list or statistics; and, if so, whether the Government will lay such lists or statistics upon the Table of the House?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: The Department have no statistics in such a form as can be laid upon the Table of the House, but the Department has satisfied itself, by careful inquiry, that the amount asked for is not greater than is required to meet the necessities of Voluntary Schools.

THOMPSON'S DIVORCE BILL [H.L.].

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to dissolve the Marriage of Agnes Weir Thompson, the wife of Abraham Thompson, of Belfast, in the County of Antrim, Solicitor, with the said Abraham Thompson, and to enable her to marry again; and for other purposes."—[Thompson's Divorce Bill] [H.L.].

Bill read the First time; to be read a Second time.

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

Alfred Billson, esquire, for the Borough of Halifax.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS BILL.

Considered in Committee.

[The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS, Mr. J. W. LOWTHER, in the Chair.]

[PROGRESS, 4TH MARCH.—FIFTH DAY.]

Clause 1,—

"(1) For aiding Voluntary Schools there shall be annually paid out of moneys provided by Parliament an aid grant not exceeding in the aggregate 5s. per scholar for the whole number of scholars in those schools.

"(2) The aid grant shall be distributed by the Education Department to such Voluntary Schools and in such manner and amounts as the Department think best for the purpose of helping necessitous schools and increasing their efficiency, due regard being had to the maintenance of voluntary subscriptions.

"(3) If associations of schools are constituted in such manner in such areas and with such governing bodies representative of the managers as are approved by the Education Department, there shall be allotted to each association while so approved,

"(*a*) a share of the aid grant to be computed according to the number of scholars in the schools of the association at the rate of 5s. per scholar, or, if the Department fix different rates for town and country schools respectively (which they are hereby empowered to do) then at those rates; and

"(*b*) a corresponding share of any sum which may be available out of the aid grant after distribution has been made to unassociated schools.

"(4) The share so allotted to each such association shall be distributed as aforesaid by the Education Department after consulting the governing body of the association, and in accordance with any scheme prepared by that body which the Department for the time being approve.

"(5) The Education Department may exclude a school from any share of the aid grant which it might otherwise receive, if, in the opinion of the Department, it unreasonably refuses or fails to join such an association, but the refusal or failure shall not be deemed unreasonable if the majority of the schools in the association belong to a religious denomination to which the school in question does not itself belong.

"(6) The Education Department may require as a condition of the school receiving a share of the aid grant, that the accounts and receipts and expenditure of the school shall be annually audited in accordance with the regulations of the Department.

"(7) The decision of the Education Department upon any question relating to the distribution or allotment of the aid grant, including the question whether an association is or is not in conformity with this Act, and whether a school is a town or a country school, shall be final."

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon Boroughs) moved, in Sub-section (2) to leave out the words "as the Department think best," and to insert the words "in accordance with a scheme to be formulated by the Department and laid before Parliament in manner hereinafter provided." The Education Act of 1870 afforded a striking contrast to the method adopted by the Government for the distribution of the grant under this Bill. Under that Act all schools were placed on an equal basis; there was no distinction drawn between schools in town and country, prosperous and unprosperous, sectarian or undenominational, all had an equal claim on the Exchequer, and if they passed the required examination that claim was satisfied. The next point was that there were expressed conditions upon which Voluntary Schools could claim this grant. Those conditions were explicitly set forth, and there could be no dispute about them. The definition of a necessitous school in the Act was also clear and explicit. It said that when a school existed in an area the rateable value of which could not produce a certain amount in proportion to the number of children in the school, a certain aid grant was to be given to it. It was, therefore, impossible that there could be any favouritism between schools on the part of the Department. The Department could not pick and choose in the distribution of the money. It was to give the money to schools in certain districts which were clearly defined by Act of Parliament. But that was not all. In addition to all those conditions which circumscribed the discretion of the Department in the distribution of the money, the Act said further that a Minute must be prepared by the Department, and that that Minute must be laid upon the Table of the House for the space of one month. So much for the Act of 1870, which was passed by a Liberal Government. Then came the Education Act of 1876, which was passed by a Conservative Government. Under the 19th Section of that Act there was a further grant made to necessitous schools. In that Act again there was a clear definition of a necessitous school—which was a school in a district with a population of 300 or 400—and no discretion was left to the Department to pick and choose. The Act of 1870 dealt with a grant of £10,000 or £15,000; the Act of 1876 only granted a few thousand pounds; but the present Bill dealt with a grant of £600,000. How was it proposed to deal with the money? No Minute or regulation was to be laid before Parliament. The distribution of the money was left absolutely to the Education Department, in consultation with the school associations. He asked the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury—if the right hon. Gentleman did him the honour of replying to his Amendment—whether he could point to a single precedent of a proposal of this kind having been incorporated by any Government in a Bill? There had been an increasing tendency in Acts passed of late to leave the real practical work of legislation to be done by the Departments. Last year, for instance, a large sum of money was given for the relief of rates in agricultural districts. The bulk of the work in the way of regulations was left to the Local Government Board. But this Bill went beyond the Agricultural Rates Act. The regulations of the Local Government Board under that Act were to be laid on the Table for ten days and discussed. But under this Bill there were to be no regulations laid on the Table. The House simply voted the money, and said to the Department, "Spend it as you please." What might happen? There were £600,000 to be distributed among the necessitous schools; and there was to be a distinction between town and country. Yet there were absolutely no regulations by which the Department was to be guided in its discrimination. There was nothing to prevent four-fifths of the money being distributed among the towns, and only one-fifth in the country districts. Before any such scheme was put into operation the opinion of the House of Commons ought to be invited upon it. What the Bill amounted to was the establishment of a bureaucracy. He begged to move—

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir ROBERT FINLAY, Inverness Burghs) said that there was no repugnancy between the 2nd Sub-section, and the 3rd and 4th.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Does not Sub-section (*a*) of Sub-section (3) limit the discretion of the Department?

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL said that Sub-section (2) referred to the distribution of the grant to individual schools. Sub-section (*a*) of Sub-section (3) referred to the allotment to the associations.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: But the Education Department is bound to pay over the lump sum to the associations?

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL: No. The payment will be direct to the school. The hon. and learned Gentleman, continuing, said it was impossible for the House of Commons to act, in the manner suggested by the Amendment, as a satisfactory Court of Appeal in the distribution of the grant. It was not a matter of general regulation but of individual discrimination as between schools. Sometimes 5s. per child would be too little, and sometimes it would be too much. How could the House engage in an inquiry with reference to the necessities of a particular school? Any question of general principle as raised by Section 97 of the Act of 1870 the House could deal with; but human ingenuity could not devise a tribunal more unfitted to decide between the claims of school and school than the House of Commons. He hoped the Committee would have no hesitation in rejecting an Amendment which was utterly unpractical and inconsistent with the whole scheme of the Bill.

MR. H. H. ASQUITH (Fife, E.) regretted that the Government had not accepted the Amendment, at least in some modified form, because a principle of the greatest importance was raised. In the sub-section under discussion the general distribution of the funds was dealt with. By this sub-section it was to rest with the Education Department to determine to what schools, in what manner, and in what amount the fund was to be distributed. Sub-section (3) provided for the allotment to particular associations, and Sub-section (4) provided for the actual payment of the grant by the Department. At every one of these stages, it was the contention of the Opposition, the matter ought to be submitted to the jurisdiction and determination of the House. [*Cheers.*] He had an Amendment down on the sub-section dealing with the allotment to associations, to give to the House of Commons a final voice as to the constitution of those bodies, and as to their government in the exercise of their large and novel functions. ["Hear, hear!"] The preliminary step, with which the Committee was now dealing, was also of very great importance, and he demurred to the suggestion that this was purely a matter of detail. One of the main grounds for the Amendment was a desire to elicit from the Education Department, in the form of a scheme to be laid on the Table of the House, a statement of the general considerations or rules which they intended to apply, first of all in determining the all-important question of what classes of schools among the Voluntary Schools were to be treated as "necessitous;" and, next, in determining by what scale the grant was to be reckoned. The Amendment was not put forward in a spirit hostile to the scheme of the Bill, but on grounds which ought to be generally accepted—the first being constitutional principle, and the other being administrative convenience. As the law stood, not a penny of public money was voted for educational purposes as to the expenditure of which the House had not by Act of Parliament an absolutely complete control. There was, first, the Parliamentary grant prescribed by the Act of 1870, and its developments. Not only were the conditions under which that grant was given fixed, but the amount in which it was given and every condition applicable to it were prescribed by a code laid on the Table of the House every year. Section 97 of the Act of 1870 expressly provided that no addition to or subtraction from these conditions should be valid without the House having an opportunity of expressing its views. [*Cheers.*] As to the fee-grant given under the Act of 1891, was that left to the discretion of the Department? Many hon. Members opposite would have preferred to see a greater degree of elasticity allowed; but Parliament, on the face of the Act, prescribed what should be the figure of the grant, and there was no possibility or power on the part of the Education Department to vary that amount from year to year or as between school and school. It was quite true that there was a provision in the Act—which he did not think had been applied in many cases—under which the Education Department were empowered, in certain very special circumstances, to vary the amount of the grant, but it was expressly provided that the Education Department should report annually all cases in which they had sanctioned the imposition or augmentation of fees under this particular section. That was the state of the case at present, and now, for the first time, this Bill proposed to leave the distribution of this very considerable sum to the absolute and uncontrolled discretion of a Government Department. The Government Department was to be at large as regarded the class of schools to whom the money was to be given, as regarded the scale of amounts in which the money was to be distributed, and, what was still more important, as regarded the constitution and allocation of these voluntary associations, which were intended to be the means and instruments of the Department in the actual distribution of the money. He asked hon. Gentlemen opposite whether they could produce any Parliamentary precedent in any part of their legislation in any Department in which an uncontrolled and practically irresponsible power had been given over money to be voted annually by Parliament from the taxes, either to any Government power or, still more, to any voluntary association constituted altogether outside Parliamentary authority. It might said that Parliament did retain an indirect and, at the same time, effective control in the fact that, when the Education Estimates came on for discussion, it was open to hon. Gentlemen to move to reduce the salary of the Vice President of the Council. Assuming for the sake of argument that the salary of the Vice President was still to be the natural Parliamentary opportunity for raising questions as to the administration of the Department, it was too much to expect that, at the fag end of the Session, perhaps in a single night, those who had objection to, or wished to criticise, the distribution of this fund among the diocesan associations of the country should be shut up within the narrow limits of that particular opportunity, and that that should be represented to them as if it were anything more than an illusory and shadowy Parliamentary control. ["Hear, hear!"] What they wanted, in this as in all other cases of a grant of public money, was that that House should have an absolute control from first to last. The Duke of Devonshire, speaking as late as February 12th last, at a more or less private meeting of the Liberal Unionist Association, made this observation:—

> "There was nothing, therefore, in what I said on that occasion which would in the slightest degree prevent either the Government of which I am a member or myself from supporting a proposal made to Parliament to sanction a special aid grant to certain schools, whether Voluntary or Board Schools, which might require such aid, such aid to be granted on conditions to be prescribed by Parliament itself, and not to be left to the discretion of the Department."

They were seeking to give effect not only to the views of the Duke of Devonshire, but to the only legitimate method of Parliamentary control, when they said that the schemes for the distribution of this aid grant should be laid on the Table of the House. He would point out, further, that they were acting not only in accordance with previous legislation as regarded elementary education, but with the vast body of legislation in other Departments which was strictly relevant to the subject. What was done in the case of the Endowed Schools Act, where they were dealing with a strictly local fund? So jealous was Parliament in that case that, apart from the Commissioners constituted by the Act and the Education Department, which was placed over the Commissioners with an ultimate voice as to the manner in which those endowments should be allocated, an express provision was made that the schemes should be laid on the Table of the House, and that not until a sufficient time had elapsed for Parliamentary criticism and approval should those schemes come into operation and become law. Again, in another case of a very similar character—that of the City of London Parochial Charities in 1883—exactly the same procedure was followed, and again this was a case of a fund in which there was only a local interest. Finally, there was the case of the Welsh Intermediate Education Act, which dealt with funds jointly produced by rates levied in the counties and by contributions from the Imperial Exchequer. Primarily the proposals for the allocation of that fund were left to the discretion of the joint committees; above the joint committees were put the Charity Commissioners, and above the Charity Commissioners there was the Education Department. If, when the matter had reached that stage, any objections were taken, Parliament required that the schemes should be laid on the Table of that House, and the vast majority, if not the whole, of those schemes had in fact been laid on the Tables of both Houses of Parliament. He asked the Government how, in view of that absolute unbroken stream of Parliamentary precedents, both where they were dealing with Imperial grants and even where they were dealing with local educational endowments, they were going to justify their action in now, for the first time, setting aside the principle which had hitherto been embodied in legislative proposals of this kind and which had been recognised by both Parties in the State? This was a principle to which they attached the highest constitutional importance, and, unless the Government had made up their mind that every Amendment of every sort or kind was to be rigorously and arbitrarily excluded from the Bill, he could not understand why they should not accept the present Amendment. ["Hear, hear!"]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.) said the right hon. Gentleman opposite had recommended this Amendment on the ground that it was in accordance with precedent. He gathered the Amendment was that every year, before allocating the money, the schemes under which it was to be allocated to the various schools were to be laid before the House of Commons.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: If there is any change.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said the right hon. Gentleman opposite recommended the Amendment on the ground that it was strictly analogous to the principle laid down by Parliament in the case of the Endowed Schools Act. Anybody who had had a lengthened experience of that House knew that nothing could give more labour and trouble to the House than this perpetual survey of the schemes of the Endowed Schools Commissioners. That trouble had to be undertaken, not merely because previous legislation had pressed it upon them and without new legislation they could not free themselves of it, but because it was manifest that, where they were dealing with private funds, which they transferred from one body to another body, from one set of people who, perhaps, represented the original beneficiaries of the charity to another set of people who did not represent the beneficiaries of the charity, it was absolutely necessary that those schemes should be brought before a tribunal which should have the right to pronounce upon them. But when, with regard to any scheme, that process was gone through it was gone through once for all; it never had to be repeated; the schemes never had to be surveyed again.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Except when a scheme is changed.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: You cannot change a scheme.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Oh, yes.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: Not a charity scheme.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: It is done under the Welsh Intermediate Education Act.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY said that might be so, and he dared say he was entirely wrong; but he did not remember any case in which, after Parliament had assented to a scheme, and which had been brought into full operation, it was again put through the mill and again brought before Parliament. At all events, whether there was the power in existing legislation of revarying these schemes and whether that power was used or not, it was certain that the schemes were brought forward with the intention of their being permanent. Now, let the Committee consider the plan seriously put before it in relation to administrative effectiveness and due economy of Parliamentary time. He believed there were some 14,000 Voluntary Schools in the country. He did not know how many of them would receive a share of the aid grant, but no doubt a very large number would. Each of them, he supposed, would, according to the analogy of the Charity Commission, be presented to Parliament in order that Parliament might pronounce upon it.

Mr. ASQUITH explained that the right hon. Gentleman was under a misapprehension. What they wanted was that the scheme should be put upon the Paper, so that the House should be enabled to judge of the principles upon which the Department acted in laying down what were and what were not necessitous schools.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY replied that if general principles were all that was asked for, those principles were already sufficiently laid down in the Bill. It had been admitted by both sides that to formulate what a necessitous Voluntary School is amounted to an impossibility. It was impossible to define the degree of necessity or to lay down in a formulated manner the exact grounds and causes from which that necessity might arise. But to think that the Education Department or any other department would have any difficulty in determining in what proportion the money should be divided between schools A, B, and C, or in coming to a conclusion as to whether schools A, B, and C were really necessitous and really required the aid grant, he did not for a moment believe. The Bill would not be improved by the Amendment. He respectfully submitted that the Amendment, so far from improving the Bill, would only occupy the time of the House by useless and unnecessary discussion, and would not afford any useful guidance to the Department.

Mr. W. S. ROBSON (South Shields) said that of course 15,000 schemes could not possibly be laid on the Table and advantageously discussed, but the number of schemes was limited, not by the number of schools, as the First Lord of the Treasury appeared to think, but by the number of associations. Neither the right hon. Gentleman nor the Solicitor General had said one single word to meet the argument in support of the Amendment. What was the real gist of the objection taken to the Bill as it stood? It was that it introduced a grave constitutional change by conferring upon a Department what were in effect legislative powers. They were perfectly familiar with the great discretion imposed upon public Departments, but whenever it was given, the principle upon which the discretion was to be exercised was carefully laid down. In fact the whole growth of constitutional government depended upon the application of that very principle, namely, control by the Legislature over the Executive. The Solicitor General made a somewhat curious excuse for conferring this particular power upon the Executive. He said the Executive could not possibly deal with 15,000 individual cases. That was quite true, and the draftsman of the Bill foresaw that. He had made the associations deal with individual schools, and that was a very significant circumstance. The Education Department, in fact, according to the argument, could not check or control the distribution of this money, and so sectarian bodies were to have delegated to them that which was in substance a legislative function. That was even more serious than legislative delegation to departments; it was legislative delegation to purely sectarian associations. If they were going to give powers so wide as this to a Department, then the constitutional result of that must be that the Department must go down with the Ministry. That was where this Bill, and similar Bills—such as the Rating Bill and the Light Railways Bill—were leading us. This was the Tory method of devolution. They would not have Home Rule, and so they had invented a new method of devolution, which would lead to the introduction of the American system into English politics. Great changes generally came about as the result of small changes not properly considered at the time they were introduced.

*Mr. ROBERT PURVIS (Peterborough) hoped the Committee would reject the Amendment. This matter was one of business. A business man in his relations with his subordinates or clerks did not tie them down in regard to every act, he did not dictate to them every act, but he judged of their acts by the results. And so Parliament might be considered in the same relation to the Education Department. The Department was its subordinate, and Parliament would not dictate every act to the Department, but would judge by the results. This Amendment rested upon the proposition, half concealed and half revealed, that Parliament was to dictate every act to the Department. The proposition might with equal force be used as an argument against the existence of the Department altogether. In the second place the Amendment was opposed to the general policy of the Bill. The localities were to come to a decision with regard to the distribution of this money, and then to send up to the Department, but this Amendment turned the machinery so that matters should work downwards, from Parliament through the Department to the localities. If the Amendment were adopted what would happen in the case of the schools that would not associate? Surely it was for the locality to decide whether a school which stood aloof was entitled to the 5s. grant. The distribution of the money must be determined by particular needs and could not be formulated in a general scheme, indeed, a scheme to be adequate for its purpose must be an encyclopædia embracing a field as wide and varied as human needs. As it was for the localities to decide, so it would be for the Department always to accept the proposal of the localities, unless they were opposed to fairness, sound policy, and common sense. It seemed to him that if the Amendment were adopted the whole policy of the Bill would be turned upside down.

SIR HENRY FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) was surprised the First Lord of the Treasury had any difficulty in comprehending the remarkably lucid speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Fife. [The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: "I quite understood it!"] Then the right hon. Gentleman took care in replying to affect not to understand it. ["Hear, hear!"] The argument as to 15,000 schemes was all very good for a Parliamentary Debate, but there was no practical life in it. ["Hear, hear!"] What the Amendment was intended to say was that the Education Department, in dealing with this new grant, should, in the first instance, lay down the general principles by which the Department would be guided in administering the fund, that those general principles should either form part of the Code, or in some shape or form be laid before Parliament, and Parliament should have an opportunity of challenging any one of those principles or conferring upon the scheme, as a whole, its legislative approval. There was no question of enormous detail in that. The hon. Member for Peterborough had not had much experience, or he would have known that the rule of Parliament was to trust nobody but itself in the distribution and appropriation of public money. A Department were the servants and not the masters of Parliament, and it was for Parliament to say when it voted public money how and to what purpose that public money should be voted. The First Lord of the Treasury had not touched what was the real crux of the situation—namely, that every shilling of money voted up to the present for educational purposes had been voted in accordance with Code and with schemes which, in every case, had been laid before Parliament. Why were the Government departing upon this occasion from the uniform practice of Parliament? He remembered that when, during the passing of the Parish Councils Act, he pleaded very strongly for some discretion being reposed in the Local Government Board, hon. Gentlemen opposite were very fond of saying, "Ah, well; but there may be a change in the Minister, and, although we may be content to trust the head of the Local Government Board to-day, we should not be content to trust him to-morrow." But suppose there was a change in the Education Department. He knew that the whole of this scheme was based on the eternity of the present Administration—[*a laugh*]—but it was quite possible that there would be another head of the Education Department, and that schemes might be proposed which would prejudicially affect the interests of Voluntary Schools. Were hon. Gentlemen going to sacrifice for a mere Party victory now what they might hereafter regard as a most valuable protection to themselves? He had found that no Party attached greater value to safeguards which protect minorities than the Conservative Party when it was in a minority; but he did not wish to put this matter upon a Party basis. He wished to continue the uniform control of the House of Commons in such matters; to preserve the continuity of the Education Acts from first to last. If the Leader of the House would not listen to precedents established by Mr. Forster, Lord Sandon, and others, perhaps he would be guided by what he himself had done. In the Education Bill of last year there was the provision that

> "any regulations made by the Education Department for the purpose of this Act shall not come into force until they have laid for one month on the Table of the House."

[*Cheers.*] In the face of that provision in last year's Bill, the right hon. Gentleman had told the House of Commons that what was suggested would be a waste of House of Commons' time. He trusted that hon. Gentlemen opposite, as Members of the House of Commons—not as members of the Conservative Party—would uphold the jurisdiction of the House of Commons in this matter. [*Cheers.*]

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Rochester) said it was impossible to see how the Amendment would work. In addition to that the Amendment was fairly open to the charge the Leader of the House brought against it—namely, that it might necessitate investigation by the Department of schemes in respect of 15,000 schools. But there was yet another objection to the present proposal. This Amendment must be taken with the consequential one appearing on page 21 of the Amendment Paper, and the effect of the two Amendments taken together was that no money would be payable to any Voluntary School until after a scheme was drawn, and had lain for 30 days on the Table of the House. The Bill had been brought in in order to remedy a very urgent necessity—["hear, hear!"]—to meet difficulties which were imminent, which were on the point of crushing the Voluntary Schools in all parts of the country, and he was afraid that the drawing up of schemes would be a very lengthy process. If the Amendment were adopted everything would have to be hung up until Parliament met next year, and then 30 days must elapse before the country could get any advantage out of the Bill. He thought that this was an absolute and complete reason why no support should be given to the Amendment. They wanted the money as soon as possible—[*ironical cheers*]—and very naturally. ["Hear, hear."] The whole policy and object of the Bill was to give as quickly as possible whatever money might be granted. ["Hear, hear!"] The right hon. Gentleman had referred to him, and it was perfectly true that he had no love for the proposal to devote this large sum of money to be administered by a Government Department at their own sweet will. He had no great confidence in the Education Department. [*Opposition laughter.*] It was not a Party question. ["Hear, hear!"] He did not want to say one word against the permanent officials in that Department. [*Laughter.*] They had always treated him personally with the greatest courtesy. They were most industrious public servants, but, at the same time, the conduct of the Education Department had not been everything that some of them desired. He did not defend a large sum of money being administered by the Education or any other Department. He was not, however, prepared to vote for the Amendment.

MR. J. M. PAULTON (Durham, Bishop Auckland) said if the Government were going to apply general principles in the administration of the Act he hoped they would be explained, and laid before the Committee. Not a single penny could be distributed by the Department except by the scheme prepared by the governing body of the association. Surely [illegible] was possible for the governing body to pass such a scheme, it was possible for the Department to place before the House the parts of which it approves or disapproves.

MR. ERNEST GRAY (West Ham, N.] said he was regardless of Party in the matter of administration. When a Minister got to active work he administered the Department in accordance with the traditions of the Department, and he threw Party feelings on one side. A great part of the speeches of Gentlemen opposite had been devoted to what the associations were going to do, and one Gentleman said that the first duty would be to fight the local School Boards with this money. But this money would not go into the hands of the associations. The money was to go direct from the Education Department to the managers of the schools. As to the suggestion that all the schemes should be submitted to the House of Commons, that would be a terrible outlook for the House.

MR. SAMUEL EVANS (Glamorgan, Mid) said the hon. Member who had just sat down had practically admitted that the proposal of the Government had completely broken down. The noble Lord the Member for Rochester, who was the champion of the Voluntary Schools, had contended that if Parliament were to keep a tight grip upon this money it would be impossible that the amount could be obtained in time. There was, however, a precedent to be found in the Rating Bill of last year, which was not in as forward a stage this time last year as this Bill now was, and yet the money under it was obtained in time to relieve the landlords and the farmers. But of course if the noble Lord meant that the money could not be provided for the year 1896-7, there might be a great deal in his argument. Subsection (4) of the clause provided that the share so allotted to each such association should be distributed by the Education Department after consultation with the governing body of the association, and in accordance with any scheme prepared by that body which the Department might approve. If the association could devise a scheme for the distribution of the money surely the Education Department would be much better prepared to do so. There was another point that he should wish to refer to, and it was one to which the attention of the Committee had not hitherto been drawn. It was clear from the language of the Bill that the Government did not desire that Parliament should have the control of this money, because by Sub-section (7) it was provided that:—

> "The decision of the Education Department upon any question relating to the distribution or allotment of the aid grant, including the question whether an association is or is not in conformity with this Act, and whether a school is a town or a country school, shall be final."

Therefore under the terms of the Subsection it would be impossible to bring the conduct, or the principle on which they acted, of the Education Department before that House at all—one of the great difficulties which hon. Members had had to encounter in moving Amendments of this character was that they really did not know the exact meaning which the Government attached to the term "necessitous" in relation to Voluntary Schools. No scheme for the distribution of this money had been laid before that House, and therefore hon. Members were bound to ask among what classes of schools this money was to be distributed. Did the Government intend to distribute this money among those schools that were necessitous because they were badly managed and were inefficient? For instance, one school that was well managed might have smaller funds than one that was necessitous and behindhand because it was badly managed. In the opinion of many hon. Members badly managed and inefficient schools should not be allowed to share in the distribution of this money. A school, moreover, might become necessitous in consequence of there being no local competition, and the subscriptions falling off, for that reason. In these circumstances he thought that the House ought to reserve to themselves the full control over the distribution of this money. Before he sat down he desired to refer to an Amendment which stood upon the Paper in his name, to the hon. Member's Amendment, which, if in order, he should in due course ask the right hon. Gentleman in the Chair to put to the Committee, namely to insert the words "the Commons House of," before the word "Parliament."

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: The Amendment would not be in order.

MR. SAMUEL EVANS said that in that case he should not propose it. For his own part, while agreeing with the principle of the Amendment of the hon. Member for Carnarvon, he should have much preferred the sanction of that House, unfettered by that of the other House of Parliament, being required to the scheme to be formulated by the Education Department; but of course, as the right hon. Gentleman in the Chair had ruled his Amendment out of order, he should bow to that ruling and should not move it. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar), who rose amid cries of "divide," said that the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury cried "divide," but in his opinion this Amendment was a most important one, and went to the very root of the Bill. ["Hear, hear!"] The fact was that that House were about to hand over this £600,000 to the Education Department without knowing the principle upon which it was to be distributed. He had no desire to fetter the discretion of that Department, but he thought that the House was entitled to know upon what lines the money was to be distributed. Surely the Government were in a position to give hon. Members some general idea of the principle of the scheme which they had in view, under which this large sum was to be distributed. Such a scheme ought to be laid before that House before this Bill became law. In supporting this Amendment hon. Members were not dealing with the individual schools, but with the associations acting with the sanction of the Education Department, from whose decision with regard to the scheme for the distribution of the money there was to be no appeal. Ought not the Department to lay down certain propositions with regard to management, efficiency, staffing, and teaching in schools? Were they to pay no regard to the amount of the subscriptions? These among other matters were essential to be determined. This Amendment was not moved in any spirit of hostility to the Bill. It was moved with the object of placing the Bill on a more substantial and satisfactory footing. ["Hear, hear!"] Last year they had before them a Bill dealing with a smaller sum of money, in which a certain amount of local control over expenditure was proposed. This year they had a Bill dealing with a larger sum of money and there was no control at all provided for. ["Hear, hear!"] The right hon. Gentleman last year thought it necessary that a scheme for the expenditure of the money should be laid before the House, in order that they might know the grounds on which they were voting the money; but this year he had omitted that proposal, and the Committee were entitled to ask his reason for omitting it. ["Hear, hear!"] There were plenty of precedents for such a safeguard. The right hon. Gentleman had said that this was an experiment. If that was so it was all the more reason why it should be placed on a satisfactory basis. He thought the First Lord of the Treasury ought to abandon the position he had taken up, and say why, when he thought it essential to put such a safeguard in the Bill of last year, he now omitted it. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. F. A. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) said that the speeches of the noble Lord the Member for Rochester and of the Member for West Ham seemed to him conclusive in favour of some Amendment of this sort. If the money was to be obtained promptly for necessitous Voluntary Schools, it would be better for the noble Lord and the hon. Member to support some such Amendment as this. Without it the Bill was absolutely without meaning. ["Hear, hear!"] The procedure of the Bill contemplated that this money would be withheld until associations were formed, and until the Department had had an opportunity of considering the constitution of these associations, and that then various schemes might be drawn up by the associations for the approval of the Department, dividing the schools within the purview of the associations into necessitous schools, and schools not requiring a share of the grant. It was perfectly obvious that that process would take a considerable time, and he would put it to any practical man to say whether the proposal of his hon. Friend or some such proposal, would not bring this money within the reach of the schools more promptly than the scheme held forth in the Bill? ["Hear, hear!"] The Committee had a right to know the principle on which the question of whether a school was necessitous or not was to be determined. He had recently been in the United States, and had inquired into the principle upon which they acted there. In the State of Massachusetts—

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS reminded the hon. Member that the only question before the Committee was that a scheme should be submitted to Parliament.

MR. CHANNING, continuing, said that his hon. Friend was asking by this Amendment for an essentially reasonable and practical safeguard, and one which had over and over again been adopted in legislation of this kind. The distribution of this money could only be effected by some definite and plain machinery, and the machinery foreshadowed in the Bill was in the last degree illusory and vague. The whole thing was left to the Department and the associations. The First Lord of the Treasury, in his introductory speech, said that the scheme of the association would in all probability usually guide the Department in the apportionment of the grant to individual schools. The Committee, therefore, had from the right hon. Gentleman the clearest indication that this money would be distributed by the association, and, therefore, they had a right to demand that the schemes in which the money would be distributed would be brought before Parliament. ["Hear, hear!"]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY rose in his place and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 212; Noes, 79.—(Division List, No. 77.)

Question put accordingly, "That the words 'as the Department think best,' stand part of the Clause."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 221; Noes, 73.—(Division List, No. 78.)

On the return of the CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS, after the usual interval,

MR. STRACHEY (who had given notice of his intention to move, in Subsection (2), after the word "best" to insert the words "after consulting the school attendance authority for the district"), addressing the Chairman of Ways and Means, said: On a point of order, may I ask, Sir, on what ground you have ruled the Amendment standing in my name out of order?

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: On the ground that it imposes certain duties upon an authority which has been constituted for wholly different duties, and those duties are sought to be imposed by this Amendment without any preliminary Resolution of the House.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON moved, in Sub-section (2), to leave out the words "the purpose of helping necessitous," and to insert the word "those." If this Amendment were accepted, the hon. Member said, it would practically leave greater discretion to the Department in dealing with and distributing this grant, and would make it clear that the chief object in voting this large sum of money to Voluntary Schools was to increase their efficiency. They would indicate their view that their definition, to a large extent, of "necessitous" was combined with the question of efficiency, and that any money they voted for Voluntary Schools was to go, not to mere necessity, which, in many cases, was self-created, and therefore did not deserve consideration, but to be used entirely in promoting increased efficiency. The word "necessitous" was one which nobody seemed to be able to define, and which the hon. Member for West Ham had just assured them he was at a loss to find a definition for. Unless, therefore, they had some further definition of the term the Bill would go forth to the public as one in which none of those interested in education would have any light or leading at all in regard to this matter. They had not even had any attempted definition of the word "necessitous," except by the hon. and learned Member for Stroud, who had rushed in where the First Lord of the Treasury feared to tread. That hon. Member's definition of a necessitous school was, to his mind, a ridiculously crude one, because he said a necessitous school was one in which the expenditure exceeded the income. That was only one of very many elements in regard to the question of necessity, and, in many cases, was one of the last considerations which would have to be taken into account in defining necessity. The First Lord of the Treasury practically threw over this definition of his supporter, and admitted that he was not in a position to define what was a necessitous school. In regard to all the questions that had been raised they wished to know from the Government whether, for instance, a school, of which the clergyman was the sole manager, could claim the special aid grant without the Department insisting upon more efficient management. More information was needed as to what the Government meant by "necessitous" schools. He contended that public money would be largely used in many cases, not to relieve educational necessity, but denominational necessity, and would not be used, as they thought it should be, simply for increased efficiency, but to keep alive schools which, from an educational point of view, had much better become extinct. They also wanted information on the important point what was meant by necessitous schools, especially as between denomination and denomination. Nearly every Roman Catholic School in the country was in every sense of the term a "necessitous" school. Subscriptions to keep them going were raised with difficulty, and these schools boasted with great justice that they had never transferred one of their schools to a School Board. If the Vice President took the same number of Roman Catholic schools as of Church of England schools he would probably see that the former were, on the whole, more necessitous than the latter, and it was a question whether the same amount per head would be voted to the Church of England association as to the Roman Catholic association. Some of the Church Schools would not require any grant; the others in the association would get from 5s. up to £1 per head, while the Roman Catholic, the practically necessitous schools, would at the outside receive only 5s. or 6s. per head. The real point in favour of the Amendment was that, if passed, it would give discretion to the Education Department to allot the grant in the way they thought best for educational efficiency, and if there was put in a word such as "necessity" which no one could define, it would greatly hamper the action of the Education Department, lead to a large amount of money being wasted by its being given to so-called necessitous schools, which could never be efficient, leaving less for poor but efficient schools whose efficiency would be largely improved by the additional grant. On that ground chiefly, and because he wanted some further definition of necessitous schools, he moved his Amendment. ["Hear, hear!"]

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER, Isle of Wight) said hon. Members opposite were raising the same questions on every Amendment. The hon. Member who had just spoken had several times raised questions which were discussed on the last Amendment. That there should be some control as to subscriptions was a matter they were going to discuss. As had been pointed out, the question of the associations did not arise on the Amendment. The hon. Member had again asked the Government to define "necessitous" schools. The hon. Member knew that an answer had been given. It was an answer that in his own humble judgment was satisfactory. No definition could possibly define the varying conditions or include all the difficulties of a school which might be properly called "necessitous," and to include specific cases which they would all agree would be necessitous, would be the worst thing they could do, because not even the united skill of the Bench opposite assisted by Gentlemen below the Gangway, could define all the cases of necessity that should be included.

MR. BUXTON said the Government proposed by the Bill to give a special aid grant to necessitous schools, and the onus was on them to define what necessitous meant.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL said it was not difficult to say what was a necessitous school. The difficulty was to give a definition which would include all necessitous schools. If the restrictive words in the Bill were cut out by the Amendment, non-necessitous schools would have a right to claim help. The real fact was that the words in the Bill were necessary to guide the Education Department in the exercise of their discretion. The hon.

Member had certainly overlooked two cases which rendered the words absolutely necessary. Take a school where the teachers were good but underpaid, and schools which were thoroughly good but carried on at a loss. These were both cases of necessitous schools, and no one could deny that there might be many other cases which the Education Department might regard as necessitous. The hon. Member had asked the question as to what was a necessitous school 15 or 16 times. The only method that could be adopted was to indicate a necessitous school as a school which might be helped, and put upon the Education Department the responsible obligation of fulfilling the duty of helping it. For these reasons the Government regarded the words proposed to be cut out as necessary in the Bill. [" Hear, hear ! "]

Mr. HENRY BROADHURST (Leicester) said the Attorney General complained that the same question was asked again and again; their complaint was that it had never been answered. This Bill, as drawn up, gave no definition whatever of what was a necessitous school. Moreover, it did not give any guarantee that the public funds should not be devoted to schools that were not necessitous. There were many schools that might be necessitous entirely through mismanagement or incompetency, and those schools ought not to have the same consideration as schools that were necessitous from sheer poverty. How were they going to prevent other schools that were not necessitous from receiving equal help from the public funds as the necessitous schools received? The Attorney General utterly failed to give them an explanation, and they might, therefore, fairly conclude that the question they put was unanswerable, and could not be explained. The Attorney General wanted to relegate to a lot of inexperienced country rectors, vicars, farmers and squires a point of law which he admitted that he himself was perfectly incapable of explaining. Surely it was reasonable to appeal to him to give them his assistance. They were honestly desirous of understanding this matter, and they had the right to come to the paid Law Officer of the Crown to help them to give advice to their constituents on a point of such importance. They had the advantage of the presence of the Solicitor General also, and he suggested that the Attorney General and the Solicitor General should consult together for half an hour to see whether they could not frame some definition; or, failing that, to see whether they could not make up their minds to advise their friends to re-draft the Bill. He should support his hon. Friend if he went to a division.

*Mr. HARRY FOSTER (Suffolk, Lowestoft) said the House must have been intensely amused at the pathetic appeal of the hon. Gentleman to the Law Officers, but he was afraid that advice was asked for in the spirit of those who had already made up their minds. He had listened carefully to the explanation of the Attorney General, and he had made the explanation of the word " necessitous " perfectly clear to the Committee. As he understood it, the difficulty of putting a definition on the word " necessitous " into the Act was, that any number of cases might arise in which a school ought to be helped out of this fund, but would not be helped if the definition were inserted in the Act. Hon. Gentlemen seemed to think that the Education Department should have an absolute discretion to do what it liked with the public money. As he understood the Bill, the Education Department would have a fixed sum given to it, and, subject to distinguishing between town and country schools, it would be bound by every scheme put before it by an association when once it had approved of that scheme. No scheme of any local association would be approved by a responsible Minister unless that scheme provided for the efficiency of the school; and if the responsible Minister exercised his discretion wrongly it would be open to that House to raise the question. If the Amendment were carried it would mean that the necessity for helping the needy schools would be removed. These words were words of limitation, in that they limited the distribution of this money to necessitous schools; the only complaint was, that necessitous schools were not defined; but he had no doubt those words would be liberally construed by the Education Department and the local associations, whereas, if the words were taken out, there would be nothing to guide the Department.

Mr. HUMPHREYS-OWEN (Montgomery) complained that they had never had anything but evasive answers in regard to this matter.

Mr. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said he thought the Government were well advised in not attempting to define the word "necessitous." In his opinion it was impossible to do it. As there were an infinite variety of schools, and as each school would have to be considered on its merits, all Voluntary Schools would, practically speaking, claim to be necessitous. If a school was not necessitous in the pecuniary sense it would be necessitous in the sense that it desired to extend the scope of its operations, and it would therefore claim to be necessitous within the meaning of the Bill. The circumstances of the schools were so varied that it would be impossible to define those that were necessitous, and the better and more simple plan would be to administer the grant all round to all Voluntary Schools.

Mr. A. H. DYKE ACLAND (York, W.R., Rotherham) said he found himself in full accord with the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down. The hon. Member had pointed out what he had ventured to express on other Amendments, namely, that they might define the words "necessitous schools" or leave them undefined as much as they pleased, but they would find in the practical working of the scheme that in 90 per cent. of the schools amongst which the grant would be administered, they would not be able to distinguish between the necessitous and the non-necessitous schools. What would happen was that as in the vast number of cases, there was no absolute distinction between necessitous and non-necessitous schools; between rich and poor schools, the word "necessitous" would in the long run be regarded as a phrase of no meaning. It seemed to him, therefore, that it would be far better to leave out the words "necessitous schools" and say that the money was to be distributed as the Department thought best for increasing the efficiency of the schools. According to a report in *The Guardian* of February 24, of the proceedings in the lower House of the Convocation of York, which met to consider this Bill, when the sub-section the Committee were now debating was reached, Mr. Mapeland Wood said that in his opinion the sub-section rigidly restricted the Department to helping necessitous schools, and moved the substitution of "those" for "necessitous." The Dean of Manchester then said, "I second that. 'Necessitous' is full of mischief." And the Convocation of York, unlike the House of Commons, agreed to that Amendment.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: I think that if there is to be obstruction, it should be artistic obstruction. [*Opposition cries of* "Oh!" *and Ministerial cheers.*] I have made an observation which has given some offence to the other side; but I remember that about a week ago, when we were considering the first line of the first Clause of the Bill, an Amendment was moved to insert the word "necessitous" before the words "Voluntary Schools." [*Cheers.*] That was argued at enormous length—[*cheers*]—by hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite. They had none of these difficulties about defining necessitous schools then. [*Cheers.*] In the very first line of the Bill they thought it better to introduce the word "necessitous" so governing the whole sub-section.

Mr. SAMUEL EVANS said that there was no question of obstruction here at all. [*Cries of* "Oh!" *and laughter.*] The Government had all along declared that the object was to relieve necessitous schools; and naturally, in considering the clause under which the money was granted, the Opposition moved to insert the word "necessitous," in order to confine the grant to necessitous schools. That was no reason why, on the second sub-section the Government should not be asked to define "necessitous." [*Ministerial cries of* "You want to leave it out!"] The Government were asked to leave it out for Parliamentary reasons which were perfectly well known. [*Ironical Ministerial cheers and laughter.*] It was in order to give hon. Gentlemen opposite an opportunity of fulfilling the task to which they had shown themselves indifferent. What, in the name of goodness, was the use of bringing in a Bill to help "necessitous schools" if no one could define the phrase? The Attorney General had said that he would not answer the question because it had been answered 15 times.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I said the question had been answered over and over again by instances of necessitous schools being given. But I said, at the same time, that no exhaustive definition could be given.

MR. SAMUEL EVANS said that the Attorney General had given two instances —one of a school where the teachers were underpaid, and the other where the school was carried on at a loss. As to the first, the Government had refused an Amendment securing the better payment of teachers; and as to the second, he would read Canon Nunn's letter to the *Guardian* in last December:—

> "When we come to deal with deficiency of income—and this, of course, only arises in Voluntary Schools—such deficiency is caused either, first, by lack of school fees, or (2) by want of sufficient subscriptions, or (3) by poor Government grants, arising from bad teaching or inefficient management."

As to the want of fees, the Government had been asked to restrict the aid to schools where no fees were charged, and they had refused. As to deficient subscriptions, the Government had been asked over and over again whether they were going to call those schools necessitous in which subscriptions had been abandoned altogether; and they had refused to answer. And as to the poor Government grants, was it to be said that a school was necessitous and had established its claim to further aid from Parliament because the teaching was bad and the management inefficient? The Attorney General, the Solicitor General, and the First Lord of the Treasury had all refused to define a necessitous school. There was one other occupant of the Treasury Bench who knew, or should know—the Vice President of the Council. If the right hon. Gentleman would not give the Committee his own opinion, let him expound that of the Committee of Council.

MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Notts, Mansfield) rose to speak, when

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY claimed to move "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 265; Noes, 111.—(Division List, No. 79.)

Question put accordingly, "That the words 'for the purpose of helping necessitous' stand part of the clause."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 280; Noes, 116.—(Division List, No. 80.)

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I beg to move. "That the Ques- part of the clause' be now put." [*Oppo-* to the word "due," in line 12, stand part of the Clause' be now put." [*Opposition cries of* "Oh, oh!" *and Ministerial cheers.*]

Question put, "That the Question, 'That the words of the clause down to the word "due," in line 12, stand part of the clause' be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 275; Noes, 119.—(Division List, No. 81.)

Question put accordingly, "That the words of the clause down to the word 'due' in line 12, stand part of the clause."

*The Committee divided:—Ayes, 294; Noes, 115.

*MR. GEORGE LAMBERT (Devon, South Molton), moved in Sub-section (2) after the word "efficiency," to insert the words:—

> "Provided that no school shall be so helped the voluntary subscriptions in support of which fall short of the average of the past three years."

He observed that on a former occasion the Leader of the House stated that what the Voluntary Schools wanted was money. He trusted, therefore, that the right hon. Gentleman would accept this Amendment in order to insure that the subscriptions to Voluntary Schools should be kept up. At present the Bill contained no provision requiring that the subscriptions should be maintained at their existing level. There was, in fact, only a pious opinion expressed that the aid grant should not be used in relief of subscribers. There were two classes of subscribers in country districts, the clergyman and the squire, who did not as a rule care so much about education—["Oh, oh!"]—but who in subscribing liked to patronise their parishioners, and to be able to say, "This is my school, and I shall do what I like with it." ["Oh, oh," *and derisive laughter.*] If hon. Gentlemen opposite disbelieved that, he would refer them to an article contributed to the *North American Review* by the Vice President of the Council, dealing with the educational enthusiasm of the territorial aristocracy. ["Hear, hear!"] Another class of subscribers to Voluntary Schools were those who did so in order to avoid School Boards and save the School Board Rate. If the Amendment was not accepted, there was a risk that this amount of money to be voted would go into the pockets of the voluntary subscribers instead of being devoted to educational purposes. In the case of a necessitous school in a country district with subscriptions to the amount of 5s. per head, and a non-necessitous school with a subscription list of 10s. per head, the last-named might receive no grant from the Vote, but the school with the 5s. list, supposed to be necessitous, would receive a grant. Those subscribers who subscribed 10s. per child were, therefore, subscribing for the benefit of schools in localities other than their own. They knew how difficult it was for voluntary subscriptions to be maintained for schools in the immediate locality of the subscriber. How much more difficult would it be therefore, unless a proviso of this kind were inserted, to get subscribers to support schools in which they had no interest. Under the Associations Clause there would be no guarantee that those voluntary subscribers would not be relieved of their subscriptions; all they would fear would be the disfavour of their bishops. In 1870 the subscriptions averaged 6s. 11¾d. per child in average attendance. In 1877 they were increased to 8s. 8¾d. because grants were only given in proportion to the amount of subscriptions to the schools. In 1876 the 17s. 6d. limit was established, and there was no need for voluntary subscribers to subscribe so largely, and they did not do it. The subscriptions had gradually dwindled till in 1894 they sunk to 6s. 6¼d. per child. This fact clearly showed that the voluntary subscribers would not subscribe to their schools unless absolutely compelled to do so. ["No, no!"]

MR. BARTLEY: What is the gross amount?

*MR. LAMBERT said he was giving the amount taken from the Education Department returns. If the gross amount of subscriptions were more than they were twenty years ago, they were not so much per child in average attendance, and therefore the subscribers did not cope with the growing necessities of education. [*Ministerial cheers.*] Then, if they were unable to cope with the growing necessities of education, why did they come to Parliament and ask it to vote an additional sum of money without a shadow of local control for schools that were called voluntary? It seemed to him perfectly ridiculous. If these were Voluntary Schools, let subscriptions be forthcoming or let them be State Schools, or denominational schools, at any rate erase the word "voluntary." The cost of education in 1877 was 33s. 9d. per head, in 1894 it was 38s. 1d., an increase of 4s. 4d. per head. And how had Government grants increased? In 1877 Government grants and fees were 25s. a head, but in 1894 the amount had increased to 30s. 4d., an increase of 5s. 4d., while voluntary subscriptions had decreased by 2s. 2½d., conclusively proving that if the Government grant was high and Parliament voted liberal sums for maintenance, then subscriptions fell off. He had been very interested in seeing how churchmen, as represented by hon. Gentlemen opposite, had endeavoured to evade their responsibilites in this matter. In 1888 the present Archbishop of Canterbury, then Bishop of London, proposed an Amendment to the Education Commission Report, in which he said—

> "We cannot recommend that in any case grants from the Department should exceed the amount contributed on the spot and that as a condition of management subscribers should provide a substantial share of the cost."

In 1895 the late Archbishop of Canterbury said, "We do not want to reduce our subscriptions." That was precisely the text of this Amendment that voluntary subscriptions should not be reduced. "No one," said the late Archbishop,

> "thinks that we are not willing to have a certain proportion of subscriptions insisted upon as a condition of this grant."

Here then was the Archbishop in 1888 declaring that no grant from the Department should exceed the amount provided on the spot. The Report of the Commission said a substantial share of the burden of the costs should be borne by the locality, and two years ago the late Archbishop said a certain proportion of subscriptions should be insisted upon, and yet now all the Government did was to provide that "due regard shall be had to voluntary subscriptions." They did not go so far as the bishops did to insure that subscriptions should be kept up to their present level. What was the House called upon to vote? The amount was said to be £616,000, but, inasmuch as the 17s. 6d. limit was to be abolished and the schools were to be free from rating, there would be considerably more than £616,000 from the public funds. He hoped the late Vice President, who occupied office in the years 1889–92, would support this Amendment; for he said on February 2 that he thought

> 'it should be a *sine quâ non* that in all cases where assistance was given there should be some guarantee on the part of the locality that subsisting subscriptions should be maintained."

What did the Chancellor of the Exchequer say, speaking at Bristol, on November 14 last year?

> "If it was in his power to relieve the supporters of Voluntary Schools in Bristol from every penny of their future subscriptions towards the maintenance of schools, he would not do it; for he was convinced that if schools ceased to be voluntarily supported, they should cease to be denominational and, in a word, to exist."

It was to be hoped that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would persuade his colleagues to accept this Amendment to insure that voluntary subscriptions should be maintained at their present level, thus securing the continuity of Voluntary Schools, and also that the Grant proposed to be allotted should be devoted, not to the relief of subscribers, but entirely to educational purposes. He moved the Amendment standing in his name.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: There are two questions connected with this Amendment which might be raised, but which I will not discuss.

Mr. George Lambert.

First, the broad question which has been raised outside as to whether the State has the right to require voluntary subscriptions at all in dealing with the national necessities of elementary education; and the other is the practical difficulty that would be raised if this Amendment were accepted in determining the amount of voluntary subscriptions in any three years. In truth, I think the hon. Gentleman will see, if he considers the matter, that on the immediate merits of his Amendment his contention can hardly be sustained. Take this simple case. You have a country parish in which there is, let us say, one wealthy landowner who has liberally subscribed to the support of the Voluntary School in the parish. He dies, and his property passes into the hands of trustees, who for one reason or another think themselves precluded from continuing the policy hitherto carried out by the owner of the property. How can it be maintained that a school under such circumstances, by the mere fact of a change of ownership in the parish, should be deprived from deriving any benefit under this Bill? ["Hear, hear!"] There are hundreds of other cases of a similar kind. There are cases, for example, in the suburbs of our big towns in which the villa population is gradually being expelled and driven further afield by a working class population far less able than their predecessors to support Voluntary Schools. [*Cheers.*] I might go on multiplying cases of that sort. How is it possible to contend that either in the case of a country parish, which I have described, or a suburban district, which I have also described, you are compulsorily to fine districts suffering from this change of fortune because, through no fault of their own, through no illiberality on the part of any person concerned, the value of the subscriptions is less than what it was in the three preceding years? [*Cheers.*] I think the statement of these two concrete instances which I have given to the Committee is sufficient to show the hon. Gentleman that his Amendment could not be accepted. ["Hear, hear!"] I will go further. The cases I have cited to the Committee are cases in which changes have occurred. Take the case in which no change has taken place and in which, in my judgment, a relief to voluntary subscribers is legitimate. Take the case of a poor clergyman who is enthusiastic for education in his parish and who spends out of his scanty emoluments an amount altogether disproportionate to anything that can properly be demanded of him in support of the Voluntary Schools. Though I am as strong as the hon. Gentleman in thinking that this money should not, broadly speaking, go to voluntary subscribers, I think that is a case in which voluntary subscribers may ask legitimately for some relief from the State. [*Cheers.*] I believe other cases can be found in our big towns of a similar character. It, perhaps, more concerns Roman Catholics than it does either Anglicans or any Nonconformist sect, but certainly there are very poor districts in our big towns in which the whole burden of the Voluntary Schools falls upon the pennies of the very poor. [*Cheers.*] In that case also, as in the one I have just cited, I think some relief to voluntary subscriptions may not illegitimately be demanded from this subvention of the State, and for these reasons I think the Committee would act most imprudently if they endeavoured by any hard and fast line to stereotype in every single case the total amount of voluntary subscriptions each year to be given in any particular district. Having said so much, I must, before I sit down, say I trust the Committee will not suppose I am of opinion that the system of Voluntary Schools can be kept up in this country unless the voluntary subscribers are prepared, broadly speaking and in the main, to maintain or even to increase the aid they now give to Voluntary Schools—["hear, hear!"]—and my hope and belief is that there will be no falling off generally of voluntary subscriptions. Of course, if the voluntary subscribers take the view which is attributed to them by some persons in this House, if they are animated by purely selfish considerations, if their view simply is that the State is giving money which they are willing to see used to save their own pockets, then I say the system of Voluntary Schools will be in serious danger. ["Hear, hear!"] I anticipate no such results from this Bill. [*Cheers.*] The hon. Gentleman, following upon speakers who have preceded him in the previous Amendment, has expressed a fear lest in certain cases people should voluntarily leave off their subscriptions in order to obtain a share of the aid grant. In my opinion self-induced poverty of that kind has no title to assistance. [*Cheers.*] The well-to-do man who says, "Here is the State coming to my assistance; let me save the £5, or £10, or £20 (or whatever it is) I have hitherto given my Voluntary School," deserves no consideration, and I trust he will receive no consideration under the Bill. [*Cheers.*] I draw some encouragement from the fact that when the State gave the 10s. grant to all schools—Voluntary and Board Schools—in the kingdom, that event which did greatly ease the position of a large number of Voluntary Schools in the country districts was, taking the country as a whole, followed by no diminution in voluntary subscriptions, and I think it is a most remarkable and encouraging fact that, in spite of agricultural depression, in spite of the enormous difficulties which both the clergy and laity in the country districts have had to face in recent years in the support of local charities, the voluntary subscriptions to the schools in these country districts have not only not materially fallen off, but have, I believe, in the main increased. [*Cheers.*] I urge the acceptance of the words in the Bill, which will have the double effect of promoting relaxation in the strain of voluntary subscriptions where relaxation is legitimate, and prevent it from occurring as a general fact all over the country. They are words which I think are absolutely necessary to give necessary elasticity, but they do not constitute an encouragement to the subscribers of Voluntary Schools to relax those philanthropic efforts on the continuance of which the existence of Voluntary Schools must in the long run depend. [*Cheers.*]

*SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Monmouthshire, W.): I am sure, from the tone in which the right hon. Gentleman has addressed himself to this question, that he feels it is one of the serious questions of the Bill. He cannot conceal from himself that there is a widespread belief that one of the results of the Bill will be to relieve Voluntary Schools from this necessity of voluntary subscriptions. [*Ministerial cries of* "No!"] That that belief exists no one can deny, and that it is one of the great apprehensions in regard to the Bill no one can question. The right hon. Gentleman himself has expressed an opinion that we were glad to hear—that, in his judgment, it is absolutely necessary to the existence of Voluntary Schools that subscriptions should be maintained. But he must also be aware that that opinion is not shared by what I may call the denominational party generally. He stated that there was an opinion among many people that voluntary subscriptions ought not to be demanded as a condition of additional grants. It is denied by a large proportion of the supporters of voluntary subscriptions that they should be maintained. We have seen the correspondence of the Bishops on the subject, in which it is challenged that any voluntary subscription should be demanded at all. In removing the 17s. 6d. limit you are unquestionably removing one of the great securities to voluntary subscriptions. The fear of many outside, and, I believe, inside, the House is, that this Bill does not give adequate security for the maintenance of voluntary subscriptions which the right hon. Gentleman says he desires to maintain or which he thinks are essential to the Voluntary Schools. With reference to the opinion that voluntary subscriptions should not be maintained as a condition of further grants to Voluntary Schools, all I can say is, that anyone who denies that must be prepared to overthrow altogether the settlement of 1870, because that settlement was absolutely founded on this clear principle—that the exemption from popular control and representation was conceded to Voluntary Schools solely on the ground of adequate voluntary subscription. That is the principle on which the whole of our legislation has gone hitherto, and, although in 1876, when a relaxation was made, still that principle was maintained as a fundamental principle upon which Voluntary Schools were entitled to receive public money without the public control which of course exists in reference to the Board Schools. I venture to say the Bill does not give any adequate or real assurance that voluntary subscriptions will be properly maintained. The whole speech of the right hon. Gentleman—though he said he desired that voluntary subscriptions should be maintained—was a catalogue of cases in which they ought not to be maintained, and those cases might be multiplied to any extent. The example of the impecunious parson of whom we have heard will be followed by the impecunious landlord. And how are you to ascertain whether or not a man who has subscribed is not able to subscribe any longer? Are you going to examine his mortgages and ascertain the number of his children? Unless you are going to lay down a rule such as the 17s. 6d. limit, how it is to be decided what is an adequate subscription or not in every parish in the country? Hitherto some rule has been maintained, to a certain degree, in regard to the adequacy of the subscription; but you are going to get rid of that rule, and in its place you are substituting nothing that gives any assurance whatever. From parish after parish where diminution of subscriptions takes place you will have representations that they have not the means to continue them. How is the Education Department to deal with that? ["Hear, hear!"] How can they deal with the minute parishes that are scattered over the country? These discussions have run very much upon the condition of the large towns, and naturally all the elements of education are to be found there, but really the difficulties in all these cases lie not so much in the large towns as in the small parishes scattered throughout the country. ["Hear, hear!"] Those who have enlarged on this subject solely from the point of view of the large towns can never have lived in country parishes, and must be utterly unacquainted with the difficulties that arise there. Unless you attempt in some way or other to give some instruction that shall influence and guide the decision of the Education Department you will have no means of arriving at any reasonable conclusion on this subject. We really are here on the very pith and marrow of the question. If you are dealing with the Voluntary Schools you are dealing with the question of subscriptions, and while you are dealing with the question of subscriptions I venture to think that we ought very carefully to endeavour to secure some greater assurance for maintaining that vital principle of Voluntary Schools than that which is now to be found in the Bill. [*Cheers.*]

MR. ABEL THOMAS (Carmarthen, E.) supported the Amendment. He imagined these words had some meaning, and he supposed they were intended to mean that due regard should be had to the maintenance of voluntary subscriptions. Various arguments had been advanced against the Amendment, but it seemed to him that some such Amendment as was now suggested was absolutely necessary. If it was urged that no regard should be had to the maintenance of voluntary subscriptions at all, what was the use of retaining words of this kind?

The hon. Member was speaking at Midnight, when the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

MILITARY WORKS (MONEY) BILL.

Committee deferred till To-morrow.

PUBLIC HEALTH (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Second Reading [5th February] further adjourned till Thursday.

LAW OF EVIDENCE (CRIMINAL CASES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

TRUSTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Considered in Committee, and reported; as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ALDERSHOT AND FARNBOROUGH) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

BERRIEW SCHOOL BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

MILITARY LANDS ACT (1892) AMENDMENT BILL.

Committee deferred till Thursday.

SUPPLY.

Committee deferred till Wednesday.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Committee deferred till Wednesday.

ASSISTANT COUNTY SURVEYORS (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

POOR LAW OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION ACT (1896) AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (1894) AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

JURIES DETENTION BILL.

Committee deferred till To-morrow.

ARCHDEACONRY OF LONDON (ADDITIONAL ENDOWMENTS) BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Second Reading [24th February] further adjourned till Monday next.

LICENSING EXEMPTION (HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

EDUCATIONAL ENDOWMENTS (IRELAND) ACT, 1885 (LIMERICK, KILLALOE, AND KILFENORA DIOCESAN SCHOOL).

*MR. LECKY (Dublin University) moved:—

> "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to withhold Her Consent from paragraph 5 of Scheme No. 90, Supplemental, framed by the Educational Endowments Commissioners relating to the Endowment heretofore belonging to the Limerick, Killaloe, and Kilfenora Diocesan School, which provides for sale by public auction of the premises known as the Roxborough Road School, held by the Rev. James Fitzgerald Gregg, and to disapprove of any part of the said Supplemental Scheme, which will operate to have the said premises sold without giving to the said Rev. James Fitzgerald Gregg a right of pre-emption of the said premises or payment of compensation for his expenditure thereon and disturbance therein."

He said that the Motion was not of great compass, and he hoped to be able to state the simple facts without giving much offence to hon. Gentlemen opposite. The diocesan school to which the Motion referred dated back from Queen Elizabeth's time. In the 12th year of Her Majesty's reign, a Measure was passed with a curious preamble lamenting "the rude and barbarous state of the great majority of the people of Ireland"—[*Ironical Nationalist cheers and laughter*]—and "the many and heinous offences which they, through utter ignorance, daily and hourly commit." [*Ironical Nationalist cheers and laughter.*] To remedy this state of things it was provided that in every diocese there should be a free Protestant English-speaking school, to be placed in the principal town of the diocese, unless a school existed there previously. This, like so many other Irish Acts, was not very perfectly observed, but it continued more or less operative until the disestablishment of the Irish Church in 1869. The original Diocesan School of Limerick fell into complete ruin, and was rebuilt on another site in 1837 by funds which were raised by the Grand Jury of the County and City of Limerick. [*Nationalist cheers.*] It was placed in the parish of St. Lawrence, of which parish Canon Gregg was now rector. When the diocesan character of these schools was done away with on the disestablishment of the Church, they passed into the hands of the Education Commissioners. Canon Gregg entered into negotiations with Mr. Hall, the occupier of the schools, who had compounded and commuted under the Church Act, and on his death in 1874 he obtained possession from the widow. He did this after consultation with the Secretary of the Educational Commissioners, and in February 1875 the Commissioners formally sanctioned his occupancy of the building during the next two years. The school was used as the parish parochial school of the parish of St. Lawrence. The tenancy of Canon Gregg was at first of a provisional character, pending the settlement of some dispute about terms between him and the Commissioners, but since 1880 he had been a regular yearly tenant at a small rent. The school when he took it was in a state of extreme dilapidation, but in his hands it has become a considerable institution. When the Commissioners of Endowed Charities looked into the matter in 1879 they found that there were 99 scholars on the roll, 64 of whom were boarders, and that the whole establishment was supported by voluntary subscriptions, which amounted to no less than £700 a year. Lord Randolph Churchill visited the school at that time and pronounced its state to be admirable. ["Hear, hear!"] When the Educational Endowments Act was passed in 1885 the Educational Commissioners resolved to sell this as well as some other properties which they had in Limerick. The question then arose what was to be done with Canon Gregg and his school? There had been a college called Mungrets College in the possession of the Jesuit body in Limerick, and the course taken in that case was that the Jesuit body received the right of pre-emption at a valuation ascertained by the Commissioners. Canon Gregg supported by the Diocesan Council of Limerick, petitioned that the same course should be adopted in his case. The two Judicial Commissioners at this time were Lord Justice Fitzgibbon and Lord Justice Naish. They were both inclined to give Canon Gregg the pre-emption he asked, and in a letter to him dated December 12, 1885, they pronounced themselves "favourably inclined towards such a project," but unable as yet to arrive at a final conclusion. Lord Justice Naish about this time died, and Judge O'Brien who succeeded him objected to the pre-emption. In consequence of his dissent the Judicial Commissioners came to the conclusion that Canon Gregg should not have pre-emption, but that he should be compensated to the extent of £450—£400 for permanent improvements and £50 for goodwill. The scheme was sent to the Privy Council, who reverted to the former plan, and instead of a money compensation, decided to grant Canon Gregg the pre-emption which he desired. The matter was again referred to the Education Commissioners, and they employed their own valuer, and consulted other valuers as well, and the result of the transaction was that the school was valued at £831. The matter came no less than three times before the Irish Privy Council, and three times the Council recommended that Canon Gregg should receive pre-emption at the valuation thus established by the Commissioners, and nearly everybody believed at that time that on that basis the scheme would become law. On May 20, 1895, in the last days of an expiring Parliament, and an expiring Ministry, the matter was brought forward by the hon. and learned Member for North Louth, and he urged that the pre-emption clause should be struck out. He did not, however, propose that the compensation clause should be inserted, and the fact that the pre-emption scheme was brought forward as an alternative to a compensation scheme was never brought under the cognisance of the House, and was not even mentioned in the Debate. The Irish Government at that time was represented by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Montrose, and, considering the relation of Parties at that time, it is not surprising that he should have supported the hon. Member for Louth, but it was a surprising circumstance that the right hon. Gentleman representing the Irish Government never informed the House that the Judicial Commissioners had recommended that Canon Gregg should receive compensation for his improvements. The matter was represented merely in this way, that the Judicial Commissioners were right and the Privy Council wrong, and that by simply striking out the pre-emption clause they came back to the position which the Judicial Commissioners had taken. Under such circumstances, and through such representations, at one o'clock in the morning, and by a majority of five, the pre-emption clause was struck out, the effect being that Canon Gregg was not only deprived of the pre-emption, which the Privy Council had proposed to give him, but also of the money compensation which the Judicial Commissioners thought he ought to have. A more shabby proceeding he never heard. The right hon. Member for Montrose dwelt on the superiority of the judgment of the Judicial Commissioners in this matter. What these Commissioners really thought of the transaction is sufficiently shown in their own protest against its extreme injustice. They

> "pointed out that the effect of striking out the pre-emption clause, without reinstating the original compensation clause, would be to deprive the Rev. Canon Gregg both of the right of pre-emption directed by His Excellency in Council, and also of the compensation to which the Judicial Commissioners originally, and still, thought him to be justly entitled, in substitution for which the clause for pre-emption was inserted. They thought that if the right for pre-emption should be taken away, the right of compensation for which the pre-emption had been substituted ought to be restored; and they suggested that it was probable that if attention had been called to it at the time, the Resolution of the House of Commons would have been so expressed." This, in their opinion, "would be the just and expedient course to pursue."

In spite, however, of this protest, the Privy Council, considering, perhaps, that they were bound by the Resolution of the House of Commons, sent back the scheme exactly in the form in which it was passed through the House of Commons in May, 1895—[Mr. T. M. HEALY: "No, no!"]—that was to say, without any clause of pre-emption and without any clause giving compensation. [Mr. T. M. HEALY: "No!"] Probably the House would think there was something behind this matter, for it was almost inconceivable that an act of such flagrant injustice could have been done. The root of the opposition arose in the animosity of a very eminent and powerful person, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Limerick, Bishop O'Dwyer, to these schools. He had no wish to speak disrespectfully of Bishop O'Dwyer, who had shown in very difficult circumstances both courage and uprightness. No one, however, would dispute that he was a person of singularly masterful character, and both the Chief Secretary and some hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House had had occasion to learn that he was apt to express very strong opinions in very unmeasured language. [*Laughter.*] For a long time Bishop O'Dwyer had been attacking Canon Gregg and his school with extraordinary perseverance, and, he was afraid he must add, with not a little of that vindictiveness which might be sometimes traced in celestial minds. [*Renewed laughter.*] It was said that the school was a proselytising one. Of this he believed that there was not one scintilla of evidence, and Lord Justice Fitzgibbon had acquitted Canon Gregg of this charge. It was, however, true there were in the school many children of mixed marriages. They were placed there by their legal guardians, and brought up as Protestants at their wish. This was the sum total of the offence, and the chief cause of the opposition to the school. It was said that the manner in which Canon Gregg obtained possession of the school after the death of Mr. Hall was irregular. All he would say in reply was that whatever was then done was done with the full knowledege and cognisance of the Educational Commissioners, who were the legal landlords. It was said that the compensation in this compensation scheme was put too high, and the valuation in the pre-emption scheme too low. It may be answered that these sums were arrived at by qualified valuers, and fully sanctioned by the Judicial Commissioners, who were the proper authorities to deal with them. On these grounds he believed absolutely nothing could be said against Canon Gregg. The House was not asked to determine between the rival schemes of pre-emption or compensation. All that they asked was that it should redress a gross and palpable injustice. He submitted that it was beyond all reasonable doubt that Canon Gregg should either obtain the right of pre-emption which three Privy Councils had proposed to give him, or else that he should receive that pecuniary compensation which, after a careful investigation, the Commissioners had pronounced to be unquestionably his due. It was on these grounds that he confidently asked the House, as a matter of common honesty, to give Canon Gregg one or other of these two things.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) said he understood that he spoke there tonight by the favour of the hon. Member for West Belfast, who had been kind enough to challenge his right to speak.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.) said he was informed that it was a mere matter of professional etiquette, and not a matter of order, and therefore he did not raise the point.

*MR. SPEAKER: Certainly this is no question of Order, as was pointed out by Mr. Speaker in the case of Mr. Ross in 1893.

MR. T. M. HEALY said that he begged to inform the hon. Member for West Belfast that as a matter of fact he had never at any time received a fee, or acted as counsel in this case. The Bishop of Limerick had been good enough to send him a brief, but, having acted in the matter in Parliament, he had returned it, which was more than could be said under similar circumstances of the hon. Member's colleagues, who had made themselves the loudest advocates in the case of the Erasmus Smith Endowments. The hon. Member for Trinity College had twitted the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Montrose with having, in 1895, made a speech in which he had had the courage to advise the House what line it ought to take in a similar matter, but he should like to know whether that right hon. Gentleman would now get up and advise the House what course it ought to take in reference to this matter. The hon. Member for Trinity College had no doubt made a very reasonable statement, but he would undertake to blow that statement out of the water. He was only sorry that a man who was so fair and so liberal as the hon. Member for Trinity College should represent so unfair and so illiberal a constituency. [" Hear, hear! " *and laughter.*] The hon. Member was challenged by parsons on his election with probably the most illiberal fusilade ever directed against any candidate—[" Question! "]—and to-night he was making amends for his speech in favour of amnesty for the Irish political prisoners. The hon. Member was doing penance in a white sheet—[*laughter*]—before a constituency of parsons—[" Oh, oh," *and* " Question! "]—who had called upon him to redress the wrongs of their Canon Gregg. [" Oh, oh! " *and cries of* " Question! " *and* " Divide! "] What were the wrongs of the Rev. Canon Gregg? They had heard in that House many denunciations of Irish tenants. The Irish tenants, at all events, were not squatters. Their possessions had been handed down to them from father to son —[*laughter on the Ministerial side, and* A Voice: " Champagne! "]—and any rights they possessed had been won at great sacrifice. The hon. Gentleman had said that Canon Gregg was entitled to compensation for his wrongs, because, under Lord Randolph Churchill's Act of 1885, he was at length compelled to see the school house, of which he had fraudulently obtained possession, put up to public auction. It would be found in the Minutes of the Evidence, taken before the Endowed Schools Commissioners, that Lord Randolph Churchill asked Canon Gregg how he got into possession of these premises, and a letter was read addressed to Canon Gregg by a Mr. Hackett, the Secretary of the Incorporated Society of Schools. The letter was as follows:—

> " Dublin, 4 November, 1874.
>
> " My dear Friend,
>
> " From what I can ascertain from a reliable source, I think if you got into possession of the premises, giving Mrs. Hall something to satisfy her, so as to put you in possession, and in that position you had to deal with the Commissioners, all would be right; and I fancy the parties in question would not object. Such is my position you will understand it from myself, not for a moment associating anyone with me in giving this advice. Still I write advisedly."

Mrs. Hall was the widow of Dr. Hall, the former schoolmaster. Lord Randolph Churchill asked Canon Gregg,

> ' By what process were you enabled to enter into possession of these premises? "

Answer,

> " They came into my possession quite unexpectedly. Dr. Hall, the diocesan schoolmaster, having compounded, was anxious to get away. Under the Church Act there could be no further payment to the school, which had ceased to be a diocesan school. Dr. Hall looked about to see what he could get for his interest, and applied to the Commissioners, but there was some difficulty there."

How did Dr. Hall then get possession of the school? He would read how from Canon Gregg's own circular.

> " Dr. Hall applied in 1865 to the Commissioners of Education to give him possession of the school house, which the secretary told him to get possession the best way he could. This he effected by paying 30s. to the parties then resident in the building, and then getting his bed in through a sitting room window."

[*Laughter.*] He hoped hon. Members opposite were proud of their *protégé*, who based a title to compensation on such proceedings. Thus Dr. Hall got his bed into the house by bribing the caretaker with 30s. He left his wife in the premises, and Canon Gregg gave Dr. Hall £30, and from 1874 to 1880—six years—he never paid one shilling or sixpence in rent. [*Cheers and counter cheers.*] Who had built these premises which now formed a battle ground for the House of Commons, and in which hon. Members took so much interest, that they were willing to stop out of their beds—a thing which they would not do for the Armenians? Canon Gregg's own account was that the premises were built at a cost of £1,913, and the ratepayers of the City and County of Limerick found the money, 95 per cent. of them being Roman Catholics. The money had all come out of the pockets of the occupiers; not one sixpence had been contributed by the landlords. What was the House asked to do? The hon. Member for Trinity College stated that he was in error in regard to the scheme which he was opposing. He had held no brief in this case, and he did not know the facts as some hon. Members opposite did, who had received briefs from the Rev. Mr. Gregg, and who would be heard no doubt in the Debate after the ruling of the Speaker. But he would take the statement of the rev. gentleman himself. The hon. Member for Trinity College had stated that the Rev. Mr. Gregg was getting no compensation whatever. What was his own statement?

> "By the provisions of the supplemental scheme it is proposed that the Commissioners of Education shall put up for public auction all their estate and interest in the land, building, and premises described in the schedule annexed to the scheme, and the Rev. Mr. Gregg shall be entitled to absolute credit out of or against the purchase money to the sum of £400."

Mr. EDWARD CARSON (Dublin University): That is the original scheme; that was struck out by the Privy Council.

Mr. T. M. HEALY said he could only give the facts as they were stated in the statement of the rev. gentleman himself. He did not know about this case beyond what he had read in the Blue-books, and in the statement of the rev. gentleman. What, then, was the meaning of the statement he had read?

> "To that part of the proposal contained in the supplemental scheme relating to the sale by public auction of the estate and interest in the Commissioners of Education, land, building, and premises, I object. . . I also object to the sum proposed to be allowed for goodwill and disturbance as insufficient."

Mr. CARSON: The supplemental scheme in respect of which my hon. Friend has made his Motion is on the Table, and contains no such proposal for compensation as that to which the hon. Member refers.

Mr. T. M. HEALY said he had not enjoyed the advantage of seeing the supplemental scheme which was laid on the Table. It was very difficult to get documents which were laid on the Table. He tried to get some information on the point, but every time he attempted he was told that some one else had the document. The Rev. Canon Gregg objected to the compensation on the ground that it was insufficient, and he claimed for a sum of £56 16s. 6d. expended upon sanitary alterations absolutely required. [*Cries of* "No, No!" *and interruptions.*] This rev. gentleman, according to his own account, objected to the amount of the allowance, and he had issued a statement to Members of the House.

[Mr. Johnston, crossing the floor of the House, handed a paper to the hon. and learned Gentleman].

Mr. T. M. HEALY thanked the hon. Member, and quoting from the Scheme, said he could not see where was the injustice to the Rev. Canon Gregg. His tenancy was undisturbed, it was allowed to continue, the sale of the premises must take place subject to his tenancy—the tenancy of a gentleman who in six years had paid no rent. The rev. gentleman made a claim for compensation for improvements, but whoever heard of a tenant holding premises under a covenant to keep them in repair getting compensation for having kept them in repair? If the Government, in relation to this Scheme, took the part of bigotry and supported the claim of this ecclesiastical squatter, if they took a line different to that which had been taken in regard to tenants in Ireland who had made their own improvements with their own hard work on their little holdings and were told that length of enjoyment was compensation, if this reverend descendant of the man who got in through the window was to have the right of preemption or compensation for disturbance, a man who never had a title or tenure, because he happened to be a proselytising clergyman, while they dealt so hardly with regard to the immemorial tenant of the soil who had been in possession, and his forefathers before him, so long as Ireland had been an agricultural country, what was to be said of their impartiality? That was the position of the Government, and remember they were doing that in the case of this man who was a town tenant at the best, while in the case of town tenants, as in the case of Kingstown, when men had claimed something like leasehold enfranchisement, they were turned out at the end of the lease without a sixpence of compensation. He should like to know what the Lord of Hatfield would think of this treatment. If men were to be turned out at the end of their leases with all their improvements confiscated, which were to pass into the landlord's possession, what was to be said of the man who never had a lease, who never had a tenure, but who was a mere squatter, who, for seven years had never paid a penny of his rent? Yet this House of Commons was now asked to reverse a decision of another House of Commons, just as one Royal Commission was appointed to reverse the decision of another, and then they declared the Government was a continuity! Yes, a continuity of fraud and imposture. The Irish Members were told of the great advantage they enjoyed in being allowed to come to that House and state their grievances before fair-minded Englishmen; and the fair minded Englishmen were driven there by the beaters of their Party, knowing or caring not one pin's point about the merits of the question, except that there was a Protestant clergyman at one end and a Catholic Bishop at the other. He only hoped the Bishop of Limerick and every other bishop would take that Debate to heart. The Bishop of Limerick gave support to the right hon. Gentleman's predecessor and relative in the days when his Government wanted that support sorely. The *Times* was willing to applaud him for his courage, and now, to-night, his reward for this sustainment of what they were pleased to call the policy of law and order, was that the Government which was going to kill Home Rule by kindness had not the courage to do what the Member for Montrose did, at all events, and say ——

AN HON. MEMBER (from the Government Benches): Where is the hon. Member for Montrose?

AN IRISH MEMBER: In bed, where you ought to be. (*Laughter.*)

MR. T. M. HEALY said that, at any rate, the Member for Montrose gave the House of Commons the benefit of his advice, which the Government refused. He would call the attention of the House to the way this matter came before them. When, on 21st May, 1895, the House annulled the former scheme, the late Government, about a fortnight afterwards, were defeated. But officials of the Irish Office of that day, instead of sending across that scheme to the Lord Lieutenant, although strongly pressed by urgent telegrams to send across the decision of the House of Commons in order that the Lord Lieutenant might make up his scheme and sign it, refused to respond to the telegrams from Dublin Castle, and it was kept on this side of the water until the late Lord Crewe went out and Lord Cadogan, he believed his name was—[*Ministerial cries of* "Oh!"]—they had so many grandees in Ireland that it was impossible to remember all their names. Although the intention of the House of Commons was plain, as anyone who read the Resolution of the House would see, what happened? It was delayed, that the Tory Lord Lieutenant might pass judgment upon it. There was anxiety to know what the Lord Lieutenant would do. The Chief Secretary was asked by the Bishop the cause of the delay. Here was the reply, dated 18th February, 1896:—

> "It became essential for His Excellency to be definitely informed whether the right of pre-emption was intended as a substitute for compensation. If so, then it was obvious that the ordinary scheme for the amount of pre-emption right might work grave injustice."

The Privy Council did, apparently, according to the statement, restore the scheme to the form in which it was left by Parliament in May of 1895. What was the body that did this? It was a body of Privy Councillors, the majority of whom were Protestants. Having heard the arguments of the reverend gentleman and his counsel, and after having stated that he delayed the Lord Lieutenant's sanction to the scheme in order that it might be laid before the Privy Council (and the Privy Council had reiterated the decision of the House of Commons and endorsed it), the right hon. Gentleman was, he understood, about to declare that he would leave the House to its own free will—in other words, to its Protestant opinion. After 17 years' experience of that House, he held the opinion that it was absolutely impossible for any Catholic ever to get justice from that House. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] He was further of the opinion that it was absolutely impossible for any Catholic in Ireland as against a Protestant to get justice. Their liberality was all pretence, and their fair-mindedness a sham. He hoped the true inwardness of this apparently small matter would come home to those who had governed thought and opinion in Ireland, and that they would come to the conclusion that he had come to—that, without either force or violence in Ireland, or something approaching to it in that House, there was no more chance of justice for an Irishman than there was for a man who was being robbed to secure justice from a brigand.

Mr. T. M. Healy.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds, Central) said that on occasions similar to this it was the practice of the Government to refrain from directing the way the House ought to vote, and from that practice they should not attempt to depart on the present occasion. The hon. Member for Louth, having a knowledge of the course the Government was likely to take, had twitted them on what he called their want of courage, and compared them to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Montrose, who, when Chief Secretary, had taken a decided line on this subject. He should have more respect for the courage of the right hon. Gentleman had he been present to explain how it was that, having voted in favour of the hon. Member for Louth on the former occasion, he would not vote for the Resolution of the hon. Member for Dublin University on the present occasion. Speaking for himself personally, he should be glad to be able to remain silent on the present occasion, especially in view of the somewhat angry correspondence which he had had in connection with the Roxborough Road School with one of those interested in the question. But silence would probably expose him to some misinterpretation, and, moreover, he thought the House had a right to expect that he should endeavour to throw some light on the confusion and obscurity with which the successive decisions of conflicting authorities had invested the question. He had noticed in the course of the tenure of his office that it not unfrequently happened in Ireland that questions which were of the least importance excited the angriest feelings and gave the greatest amount of trouble. The entire capital value of the endowment disputed in the present instance was not more than between £800 and £900. But in connection with the claims of a single individual in regard to this property the whole machinery of the Judicial Commissioners, the Privy Council and Parliament had been engaged twice over. The Privy Council had in connection with this question differed twice from the Judicial Commissioners. It had differed once from itself. Parliament had once differed from the Privy Council, and now, if the Motion of his hon. Friend the Member for Dublin University was accepted, Parliament would for the second time have differed from the Privy Council. The question now presented to the House was one of the mose difficult it was possible to imagine. He would not trouble the House with the recital of all that had taken place in regard to the endowment from the beginning. The statement of his hon. Friend the Member for Dublin University was substantially correct. But he would take up the tale at the moment when the Judicial Commissioners had framed a scheme in connection with the endowment. The Judicial Commissioners had come to the conclusion in the first instance that the Rev. Mr. Gregg was entitled to compensation for expenditure of £400 for permanent improvements in the building, and to £50 for disturbance. That scheme was sent up to the Privy Council, who cut out the clause relating to compensation, but inserted a clause giving to Canon Gregg the right of pre-emption at a fair value of the ground and building. The scheme was remitted to the Commissioners to decide what the value was, and they fixed it at £831. The amended scheme was again presented to the Privy Council, who again remitted it to the Judicial Commissioners that they might further examine into the true value of the ground and building. This inquiry resulted in the reaffirmation of the former valuation; and in that form the scheme came up to the House of Commons. At the suggestion of the hon. and learned Member for Louth that part of the scheme which related to the right of pre-emption was thrown out by a majority of five. Shortly after that the Government went out of office, and their successors, the present Government, in consequence of a minute written by one of the Judicial Commissioners, referred it back to the Commissioners before being finally approved by the Lord Lieutenant.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Was that a public or a private minute?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR said that he could not say, but the substance of it was the same as the Report of the Judicial Commissioners on the scheme as it came from the House of Commons. That Report stated that, in framing the original scheme, the Commissioners did not think it right to give an absolute right of pre-emption to Canon Gregg. On the other hand, they did not think it just that he should be disturbed in his possession without compensation in respect of some part of his expenditure. The effect of now striking out the pre-emption clause, they said, without reinstating the compensation clause in substitution for the pre-emption clause so introduced, would be to deprive Canon Gregg both of the pre-emption directed by his Excellency in Council, and also of the compensation to which the Judicial Commissioners thought, and still think, him to be justly entitled. Upon receipt of these observations the Irish Government considered that it was impossible to leave matters as they stood. Accordingly the Judicial Commissioners were invited to prepare a fresh scheme, that being in accordance with the only precedent on the subject. The Judicial Commissioners did prepare a fresh scheme, in which they reinstated this provision as to compensation. This supplementary scheme was brought before the Privy Council, who decided that, under no circumstances, was Canon Gregg entitled to compensation in respect of his tenancy of the school. They felt bound to ask the Judicial Commissioners to draw up a new scheme, and he thought the House would admit that, in view of the very strong expression of opinion by two Judges of the eminence of Lord Justice Fitzgibbon and Mr. Justice O'Brien, one a Protestant and the other a Roman Catholic, it would be taking a serious responsibility on itself at the present time in rejecting the Motion of the hon. Member for Dublin University. At the same time he thought there was a great deal to be said on the other side, and he would state why the House was placed in a position of peculiar difficulty in connection with this question. In the first place, the Privy Council must be regarded as in a certain sense a Court of Appeal, and the Privy Council had decided for the second time that Canon Gregg was not entitled to any compensation. They were now placed, in respect of these two decisions, in this position. The Judicial Commissioners, on the one hand, had declared—at least the practical effect of their declaration was—that an injustice would be done unless Canon Gregg either received compensation or was given the right of pre-emption. The Privy Council, on the other hand, had decided that Canon Gregg was not entitled to any right of compensation. Therefore, it appeared, on the one side they had the Judicial Commissioners declaring that one of two alternatives must be adopted; on the other side, they had the Privy Council declaring that one of those alternatives was unjust, and on the other side they had the Judicial Commissioners themselves condemning the other alternative as unjust. The House would therefore see what a great difficulty they were in. But he would call attention to the position in which they would stand, supposing the Resolution were accepted. If it was accepted the scheme, as it stood, would be destroyed altogether. The suggestion was, that the Commissioners should be invited to draw up a scheme and give a right of pre-emption, but he saw little or no probability that, under the circumstances, they would consent once more to take any further part in this extraordinary merry-go-round. But he felt it would be a misfortune if this scheme were entirely to fall to the ground. It might be said the result of that would be to leave Canon Gregg where he was, in possession of the school. Yes; but Canon Gregg was only a yearly tenant, a precarious tenure. The House would see this was a most extraordinary position. It appeared to him that whatever course the Government adopted objections might be urged which would be fatal to that course; there would be a deadlock in any case, and under those circumstances he left it to the House to take their own course. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"]

MR. T. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour) said it seemed to him the right hon. Gentleman's misunderstanding was due to the fact that he had not studied the scheme. So far from this scheme preventing Canon Gregg having the right of compensation or the right of pre-emption, it gave him both alternatives. The property was to be sold subject to the tenancy of Canon Gregg. That gave Canon Gregg the right to go into the market—

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. W. KENNY, Dublin, St. Stephen's Green): Giving power of sale to anybody is not pre-emption.

MR. HARRINGTON said that as occupying tenant Canon Gregg was able to offer a higher price than anybody else. What more did Canon Gregg want? Then supposing the premises were bought over his head, that he did not exercise his right to purchase, whoever bought had to compensate him for his tenancy. It was amusing that the Chief Secretary should have looked upon this question as a question difficult of solution, when it was clearly devised by the Judicial Commissioners that this man should have the choice of being a purchaser and continue in possession, or, if not a purchaser, to get due compensation for disturbance. Under these circumstances he did not see why any appeal should be made to the House to go back on its decision on a former occasion, and to bring itself into collision with the Privy Council.

MR. SERJEANT HEMPHILL (Tyrone, N.) said he felt bound to make a few observations, for he feared that the insinuations and beguiling graces of the hon. Member for Dublin University might induce the other side of the House to set up a very bad precedent in this case. He wished to know whether there was to be any finality with regard to the proceedings before the Privy Council. The case had been heard in December last before a full attendance of the Judicial Committee, and on which occasion the Reverend Mr. Gregg was represented by eminent counsel. The conclusion that was then arrived at was, that the Reverend Mr. Gregg was entitled to no compensation, and that the idea of his being entitled to pre-emption was wholly unreasonable. The decision of the tribunal spoke for itself, because it entirely ignored the Reverend Mr. Gregg's claim, and directed the property to be sold to the highest bidder by public auction. Of course, the rev. gentleman could attend the sale by auction, like anyone else, and might bid for the property. The sale, of course, was to be subject to the existing tenancy of the rev. gentleman, whatever that might be. That tenancy appeared to be one from year to year, without any limitation as to its duration. The hon. Member for Trinity College had complained that reference had been made to what occurred a century and a-half ago; but the hon. Gentleman himself had alluded to what had taken place in reference to this property in the time of Elizabeth. It appeared from the facts of the case that the schools were built in 1837 at the expense of the ratepayers of Limerick, and that subsequently the property was occupied by the Reverend Mr. Hall, after whose death it was sold by his widow, who had no earthly title to it, to the Reverend Mr. Gregg for £20. Mr. Gregg had no merits. [*Ministerial laughter.*] He got in as a trespasser because Mrs. Hall had no title, and he continued in possession from 1874 to 1880 without paying a shilling of rent. He then made a contract with the Commissioners to pay £20 a year, as a yearly tenant, and keep the premises in repair, but he broke his contract and allowed the premises to fall into dilapidation. Mr. Gregg had laid his case before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council and they were unanimous in their opinion that he had no merits and no claim for compensation, but that he might go on as a tenant, and that the premises would probably be sold, subject to his tenancy. The only Resolution that could be passed in the House of Commons, as he submitted, was to strike out that clause altogether, and then where would the scheme be? The House had no power to insert a clause for compensation. In the circumstances he respectfully asked the House to be guided by the wise and moderate suggestion of the Chief Secretary, and not to stultify itself, and not to cast ridicule on the Judicial Committee by agreeing to a Motion which, he confessed, having regard to his philosophical and historical nature, he was surprised the hon. Gentleman the Member for Dublin University did not leave to someone else. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. FLYNN said that this affair was an outrageous attempt at jobbery. This claim of Canon Gregg to compensation was most audacious. The nominal rent of the premises was £30 a year, but the Commissioners of National Education had been spending that money for the last 10 years in keeping the place in repair. The reverend gentleman was only a tenant from year to year, and was bound by the terms of his tenancy to keep the premises in proper repair; but in 1892 the architect of the Board of Education visited the house and pronounced it to be dilapidated and in a filthy state. The Irish Members had difficulty enough in getting anything like fair play for honest agricultural tenants who made improvements; but hon. Members opposite readily supported baseless claims in cases where there was a sectarian element. It was intolerable that the House should be kept sitting to an advanced hour in order to entertain unjustifiable claims of this kind.

MR. WILLIAM JOHNSTON rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but Mr. Speaker withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

Debate resumed.

MR. VESEY KNOX (Londonderry) described the Rev. Mr. Gregg's claim as a ridiculous one, and pointed out that the rev. gentleman was bound himself to do the repairs for which he was now claiming during a period of 20 years, when he was allowed by indulgent landlords to remain in occupation of the premises on extremely favourable terms. The item of £400 was made up of such items as £20 in cash to Mrs. Hall for possession; postage of order, 7d.; car hire and man, 5s.; washing out the house, 9s. Even religious bigotry apparently could make hon. Members opposite vote in support of a scandalous job like this. Then there was a poor rate claim in 1895, whitewashing in 1874, 3d. spent in nails 15 years ago, painting a gate in 1875, an ironmonger's bill, 3s. 4d., in 1875, and charges for the insurance of the premises. In the name of honesty would hon. Members vote that this money should be paid to this gentleman out of the endowments for education in the county of Limerick? Among the items of the account were such as these:—Evergreens, presumably for Christmas decoration; glazing, which meant, he supposed, the repair of broken windows; repairing gate, 30s., in 1879; glazing again in 1882; 12 loads of gravel in 1882. It was an account made up almost entirely of the smallest kind of repairs, for which if a tenant came into the Land Court for compensation as for permanent improvements he would be justly laughed out of Court. Of course strange things were done in Ireland out of religious bigotry, and there were in Ireland exaggerated ideas on the rights of property. He remembered reading in the hon. Gentleman's book how a Lord Lieutenant of the last century remarked that probably Ireland was the only country in the world where a professorship of Greek in fee could be granted, and perhaps it was upon that principle of dealing with an educational endowment the hon. Member was asking the House to act. It was difficult to get Members to vote against their own Party and their own religion, but here were the details of claim before them, here were the facts. This Gentleman was bound by his agreement to keep the house in good repair, and at the determination of the tenancy—

*MR. SPEAKER reminded the hon. and learned Member that the covenant had been read several times. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. KNOX said he would not read it again, he was only trying to press home his point that what the House was being asked to do would be a scandalous misapplication of the funds of an educational endowment. This rev. Gentleman was bound to keep up these premises in good repair, and here was a Report on the state of the premises by an architect of a representative body of the Church of England—

*MR. SPEAKER, interrupting the hon. and learned Member, said this also had been read to the House, not the whole of it, fortunately, but parts of it. ["Hear, hear!" *and cries of* "Divide!"]

MR. KNOX said this had not been read. [*Cries of* "Order!" "Divide!" *and* "Adjourn!"] This Report had not been read, and he would proceed to read it. The Report of the architect to the Representative Church body of Ireland stated:—"I find the House is in a very dilapidated condition—"

COLONEL SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.): I beg to move, "That the Question be now put." [*Ministerial cheers.*]

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The House divided:—Ayes, 142; Noes, 48.—(Division List, No. 83.)

Question put accordingly.

The House divided:—Ayes, 134; Noes, 51.—(Division List, No. 84.)

Resolved, That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to withhold her consent from paragraph 5, of Scheme No. 90, Supplemental, framed by the Educational Endowments Commissioners, relating to the Endowment heretofore belonging to the Limerick, Killaloe and Kilfenora Diocesan School, which provides for sale by public auction of the premises known as the Roxborough Road School, held by the Rev. James Fitzgerald Gregg, and to disapprove of any part of the said Supplementary Scheme which will operate to have the said premises sold without giving to the said Rev. James Fitzgerald Gregg a right of pre-emption of the said premises or payment of compensation for his expenditure thereon and disturbance therein.

To be presented by Privy Councillors.

And it being after One of the Clock, Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put.

House adjourned at Twenty-five minutes after Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 9th March 1897.

WORKING MEN'S DWELLINGS BILL [H.L.].

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY moved the Second Reading of this Bill. He said they were very familiar with the Measure inasmuch as it had passed a Second Reading in another place on two occasions, and only in June last it passed through all stages in their Lordships' House, virtually without opposition. Under these circumstances he did not think he would be justified in trespassing upon their indulgence at any great length to-night. He reminded their Lordships that the Bill was of a purely permissive character, providing as it did that any local authority might, if they thought fit, make advances under the provisions of the Act to any workman for the purpose of buying the freehold or leasehold interest of the dwelling-house in which he resided or intended to reside. In the Bill there were ample provisions for the safeguarding of the interests of the ratepayers. The Bill was submitted in the very form in which it emerged from their Lordships' House last year, and, therefore, he did not think they would raise any objection to the Second Reading today. He had taken considerable interest in this question, and he found that in the North of England, where he resided, there was a great desire on the part of the working classes to obtain on fair and just terms the possession of the houses in which they lived. There was nothing in his opinion which conduced more to thrift and the self-control and independence of the working classes than their being enabled on fair terms to obtain possession of their houses; and some time ago he promised large audiences in the north that if no other Member of the House would introduce such a Measure as this he would gladly introduce it and do his utmost to secure its passing. Many Members of the present Government, when in Opposition, promised to support legislation of this character; indeed, he believed that the large majority which the present Government possessed was largely due to the fact that right hon. Gentlemen pledged themselves to bring in social legislation of a character which would benefit the working classes of the country. He did not hesitate to say that if the Government had brought in Measures such as this the results of the recent bye-elections would not have been so disastrous to the Unionist cause as they had been.

LORD HARRIS said the Government offered no opposition to the Second Reading, indeed, they evinced their interest in the matter last year by suggesting Amendments to the Bill when introduced, which his noble Friend was able to accept. Last Session a Bill of a somewhat similar character was introduced in the other House, but it contained certain provisions which were not included in this Bill. For instance, it laid down rules as to the proportion of the purchase-money to be advanced, and it enabled local authorities to advance money to working men with which to build houses as well as to acquire the dwellings in which they in fact resided. The present Bill only authorised advances for the latter purpose. It was pointed out on the Second Reading of the Bill introduced into the House of Commons that the effect of such a Bill might possibly be to throw upon local ratepayers pecuniary burdens for the benefit of private individuals, and that being the case it was obviously incumbent upon the Legislature to examine very carefully the details of a Measure of the kind, and make sure that whilst they were doing their best to render more comfortable the homes of the working classes they did not do injustice to those upon whom the primary pecuniary burden was laid. His instructions were to offer no objection to the Second Reading; but of course the Local Government Board reserved to itself the right to criticise the proposals when the Bill got into Committee.

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY said that at first sight the proposal that the money of the ratepayers should, at the discretion of the local authority, be given to workmen to enable them to obtain possession of their dwellings was open to criticism. He could not help thinking, however, that the local authority who were on the spot and capable of making every possible inquiry were

commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

the persons best able to decide whether money should be advanced to honest working men for the purpose now proposed.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY thought the principle of the Bill was one which it was very desirable should receive the consideration of the House. He did not believe that the risk of overburdening the ratepayers would be serious, provided always that not too much was advanced upon the security of the houses. He was not very sanguine as to workmen in many places desiring to purchase their houses, and for the very reason that workmen were very migratory. They had to move from place to place in order to obtain employment, and he believed that in a large number of cases to become the owners of their dwellings would not assist them. But there was another matter which was not touched in the Bill, and that was the provision of proper dwellings. There were many places, especially in rural districts, where there were not suitable dwellings and where it was extremely desirable that such dwellings should be provided. The principle of the Bill would certainly have his support.

Read 2ª (according to Order); and committed to a Committee of the whole House on Friday next.

House adjourned at a Quarter before Five o'clock, to Thursday next, a Quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 9th March 1897.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

MIDLAND AND GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAYS JOINT COMMITTEE BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a Second time."

MR. HARRY FOSTER (Suffolk, Lowestoft) proposed to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months." He said that he had occasion to bring this matter before the House a few days ago on a question of non-compliance with the Standing Orders; but, by the advice of the Chairman of Committees, he withdrew his Motion, because he was then precluded from discussing, and indeed did not intend to discuss, the merits of the Bill. The point he brought before the House was, that the main feature of the Bill was the construction of a line from Great Yarmouth to Lowestoft, and that a large part of the line—two miles—traversed what were known as the Gunton and Lowestoft Denes to the north of Lowestoft, which were a public recreation ground, on which were rights of common and other rights which had been enjoyed from time immemorial. The point he raised the other day was, that where common lands were to be taken for public work, the Standing Orders required that certain notices should be given by advertisements, the depositing of plans, and otherwise so that the public, and all persons whose rights were interfered with, should have ample notice of the intention. The Chairman of Committees on that occasion stated that the promoters denied that these were common lands. He did not propose to go into that question to-day. He would only say that he thought that if the Chairman of Committees had had in his possession the evidence which he (Mr. Foster) possessed he would not have ventured to make such a statement. ["Hear, hear!"] It was, of course, merely the statement of the promoters. The Bill had been described by the Chairman of Committees as an Omnibus Bill, and if it were an Omnibus Bill in the ordinary sense it would manifestly be unfair to reject the whole Bill because some part of it was unsatisfactory; the more proper course would be to allow it to be dealt with and amended, if necessary, by the Committee upstairs. The Bill, without doubt, did authorise other work at King's Lynn and at Yarmouth, but the main feature was the construction of the line from Great Yarmouth to Lowestoft. Apart from the question of the interference with common lands, he had to object that this was a proposal for the construction of a single line of railway only. Down in the Eastern Counties they had had sad experience of the extreme danger of such lines, whatever precautions might be taken. They had had two or three very terrible accidents—one of them in his own constituency on a Christmas Eve, some three years ago, where, notwithstanding the precautions of the staff system, one of the trains went, in a fog, past a double siding and came into collision with a train coming in the opposite direction, with loss of life and serious injury to survivors. On public grounds, and apart from any local interest, these single line railways were objectionable, and it was clear that Parliament should not sanction the making of a single line where a double line was practicable. He might say that the majority of the inhabitants of Lowestoft were not opposed to the making of a new line in itself. Provided the conditions were satisfactory, they were not opposed to the advent of any number of competing lines to Lowestoft. They would welcome the Midland, the Great Northern, or any other system. But they did object to certain of the conditions in this case. With regard to the fact that this was to be a single line, he might point out that there was a Bill before the House, which had passed its Second Reading, promoted by the Great Eastern Railway Company, which would give Lowestoft better facilities and more direct communication with Great Yarmouth by a double, not a single, line, and which would not interfere with the Denes or any public right thereon. This proposed line would pass for a distance of something like two miles over the Denes, which were not only a healthy recreation ground, but a very beautiful piece of landscape highly prized by the inhabitants and by visitors. They also furnished the only available ground at Lowestoft for the fishermen to dry their nets, and for this purpose they had been used from time immemorial. The more important to remember for Lowestoft in respect to the magnitude of its fishing industry, was second only to Great Grimsby, and in respect to the value of the fish brought in was second only to London. ["Hear, hear!"] In addition to the public advantages of the Denes which he had enumerated, they were a useful and attractive camping ground for the Volunteers, of whom 7,000 were welcomed by the people of Lowestoft last year alone during their summer outing. A large part of the Denes were required by the Corporation for the benefit of the public. Mr. Colman, who resided in the neighbourhood, subscribed £750 towards the purchase money on the understanding that these Denes should be reserved to the use of the public for ever. The Local Government Board, after an inquiry, sanctioned a loan to enable the purchase to be completed, and one of the grounds on which that loan was sanctioned were that the Denes should be purchased for the use of the public for ever. ["Hear, hear!"] A public meeting at Lowestoft, attended by some 600 people, had, on the 12th February, with only six dissentients, condemned this Bill, and requested the Corporation to petition for its rejection. Under all circumstances, he hoped that Parliament would reject the Bill at this stage, and that the people of Lowestoft would not be put to the expense of opposing the Bill in Committee. In view of the fact that the double line of the Great Eastern was almost sure to be sanctioned, he thought it possible that even if the Bill now under discussion were passed, the line it was to authorise would not be made, for how could a single line compete against a double line? ["Hear, hear!"] There were other portions of the Bill, with which he had no concern, and which certainly he did not desire to oppose; but they were but a small part of the Bill. If the promoters would intimate that they did not intend to proceed with the objectionable part of the Bill he should withdraw any opposition to it and allow it to go to the Committee upstairs. He begged to move the rejection of the Bill.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.) seconded the Amendment.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS (Mr. J. W. LOWTHER, Cumberland, Penrith) observed that he did not on the former occasion, neither did he now, speak on behalf of the promoters of the Bill. He had no authority to do so and was not in the least concerned whether the Bill went through or not, except so far as he was responsible for the good conduct of the private Bills that came before that House. The hon. Member for Lowestoft had stated that his constituents took an objection to a certain portion of the Bill. He thought it only fair to remind the House that this was an

Omnibus Bill. He was perfectly prepared to admit that the chief point of the Bill related to the construction of a railway, but there were other parts which were important, such as the construction of a dock at Gorleston, the widening of the line at King's Lynn, and other works. All these were works which the hon. Member said were unobjectionable, but all these would be destroyed if the hon. Gentleman were successful in throwing out the Bill on the Second Reading. He submitted that the hon. Member had shown no good reason why the Bill should not go in the ordinary course to a Committee upstairs, so that its merits might be inquired into. The hon. Member's constituents had presented a petition against the Bill, and so had the Corporation of Lowestoft, and all concerned would be entitled to be heard before the Committee. If the grounds upon which the hon. Member raised his objections, when the evidence was examined before the Committee, turned out to be good grounds, he had very little doubt the Committee would reject the Bill. On the other hand, if it appeared that the general benefit which would be derived by Lowestoft from this fresh railway communication outweighed any injury which might be inflicted by the bi-section of this portion of the Denes, then he thought the Committee would probably pass the preamble of the Bill. It might perhaps modify the action of the hon. Member if he stated that if the Bill were read a Second time he would be prepared to support an Instruction which stood in the name of the Member for East Norfolk (Mr. Price) to the following effect:—

> "That it be an instruction to the Committee that they have power to inquire and report whether any commons or common lands are proposed to be taken under the Bill."

["Hear, hear!"]

Sir JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth) as representing a constituency with which the Bill dealt, hoped his hon. Friend would withdraw his opposition. It was proposed by the Bill that docks should be constructed at Yarmouth, which were greatly needed at that port, and were very desirable in its interest. He hoped, therefore, the hon. Member would allow the Bill to be Read a Second time, so that it might be sent to a Committee upstairs.

Chairman of Ways and Means.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) also appealed to the hon. Member to withdraw his opposition. He was surprised to see the hon. Member set himself against the increase of railway facilities in that part of the country. The hon. Gentleman did not ask that the petition should be looked into, and the good parts of the Bill left whilst the bad parts were taken away, but the present Motion was that the whole Bill should be rejected. He could not help remarking that the Bill proposed the construction of a dock at Yarmouth, and that dock might possibly compete with Lowestoft. He did not know whether that was the reason for the hon. Member's action.

Mr. HARRY FOSTER: No; it is not.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES would assume it was not, and confidently expected that the hon. Member would give way to the appeal which had been made to him. This was eminently a case for consideration by a Committee upstairs. It was quite different from the Bill of the London County Council. It was a case in which the railways would spend their own money, take their own responsibility, and if there was injustice to be done the Committee upstairs, which acted in a judicial way, would undoubtedly see that right was done.

Mr. HARRY FOSTER remarked that after the statement of the Chairman of Committees, that he would support the Instruction standing in the name of Mr. Price, he would ask leave to withdraw his own Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Bill read a Second time.

NOTICES OF MOTION.

FOOD SUPPLIES (UNITED KINGDOM).

Mr. SETON-KARR (St. Helen's): To call attention to the wholly inadequate production of Food Supplies within the area of the United Kingdom in relation to its large and increasing population; and to move, that, in the opinion of this House, the dependence of the United Kingdom on Foreign Imports for the necessaries of life, and the consequences that would arise therefrom in the event of war, demand the serious attention of Her Majesty's Government.—[*Tuesday, 6th April.*]

CLERICAL INCOME (TAXATION).

COLONEL MILWARD (Warwick, Stratford-on-Avon): To call attention to the Taxation of Clerical Incomes; and to move a Resolution.—[*Tuesday, 6th April.*]

QUESTIONS.

NEW FOREST (COMMONERS' PIGS).

SIR JOHN BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Woods and Forests, will he explain on what grounds the pigs belonging to commoners of the New Forest, turned out in accordance with immemorial custom to run in the open wastes of the forest, and properly ringed to prevent damage to the pasture, have recently been impounded by order of the deputy surveyor, and only released on payment of large and arbitrarily fixed sums of money; whether he is aware of the hardship of thus compelling the commoners either to submit to an infringement of what they believe to be their rights, or to engage in expensive litigation with a Government Department; and whether he can give the House an assurance that there will be no further interference of this kind with a class of small stock-keepers and farmers, who have maintained themselves in independence throughout the agricultural depression, and in whose welfare Parliament has frequently shown an interest?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. W. R. HANBURY, Preston): The Register of the Decision of claims of right of common and other rights in and over the New Forest pursuant to 17 & 18 Vic., cap. 49, declares that—

> "Every right of common of mast is to be exercised only in time of pannage, that is to say, on and from the twenty-fifth day of September up to and on the twenty-second day of November yearly, in all the open and unenclosed woods and woody lands of our Lady the Queen in the said Forest, for all their hogs and pigs ringed, levant, and couchant, in and upon the lands in respect of which the allowance is made, upon payment, unless otherwise expressed, yearly, to or for the use of our Lady the Queen, for every hog or pig exceeding the age of one year, fourpence, and for every hog or pig under that age, twopence."

The right to turn out pigs is thus expressly limited to the period commencing 25th September and ending 22nd November, and there has been no interference on the part of the Crown Officers in the forest with that right. Two herds of pigs found by a forest keeper in the open forest after the pannage season had ended, were recently impounded. In such cases the usual fines are 2s. 6d. for each sow, and 1s. 3d. for each "shoot" or half-grown pig, and 1s. additional for each pig not properly rung. These fines rest on ancient custom. The keepers had been instructed by the deputy surveyor to levy "the double fine" when they found the pigs unrung, that is, the 2s. 6d. or 1s. 3d., as the case may be, and, in addition, the 1s. for the want of the ring. The keeper who seized the two herds referred to, misunderstanding the deputy surveyor's directions, demanded twice the amount of the ordinary fines, namely, 5s. for each sow, and 2s. 6d. for each shoot, and, in addition, 1s. each for 10 that were not rung, but on this mistake being brought to the deputy surveyor's notice, it was rectified. There has been no new departure from any custom, and none is contemplated.

SIR J. BRUNNER: Can the right hon. Gentleman assure me that this is not a new move on the part of a "new broom?" These fines have not been inflicted for a long time.

MR. HANBURY: There has been no new departure whatever. It is simply following an old custom.

MR. SCOTT-MONTAGU (Hants, New Forest): Arising out of this, I can assure the hon. Baronet that these questions are dealt with—[*Cries of* "Order!" *and laughter.*]

INDIAN FAMINE.

SIR ANDREW SCOBLE (Hackney, Central): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he is able to give the House any information as to the estimated quantity of food grains in local stocks in India in January 1897; the quantity of food grains imported into

British India during the past six months, and the actual or expected out-turn of the rabi or cold weather crops in India during the present season?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): The further famine papers which will, I hope, shortly be distributed to hon. Members, give the latest information on the topics of my hon. Friend's Questions. Meanwhile I may state—(1) During last month the Government of India reported that visible supplies of food were sufficient for daily requirements throughout India. If failure of stocks was anticipated prices would rise; but they have not risen. It is not possible to ascertain correctly the amount of food stocks in each famine tract; but at present apprehension regarding the sufficiency of food stocks is not felt by the Government of India or the Local Governments, except in isolated areas of North-East Behar, where the local Government has been authorised to take special measures to aid private trade. I have further consulted some of the leading traders in food grains, and they endorse the Government forecast. (2) The latest import figures that have reached me are for last December. During the last three months of 1896 the foreign importations of grain into India were 27,179 tons, as compared with 1,567 tons in the corresponding quarter of 1895. These figures do not include importations from Burma, which has this season an exportable surplus of over 1,600,000 tons of rice. Up to the middle of February 80,000 tons of the Burma surplus had been shipped to India, and tonnage had been engaged for 20,000 or 30,000 more. Knowledge of the Burma supplies was said to be keeping down prices of food in Bengal. (3) Fair spring crops are expected in parts of the Punjab, North-West Provinces, and Oudh. In the Central Provinces the yield of the spring harvest is poor.

SIR J. KENNAWAY (Devon, Honiton) asked whether the noble Lord could give any information as to the price of food in the various famine districts at the present time.

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: Seeing that the country over which the famine extends covers an area over three times as great as that of England, Scotland, and Ireland, it would be impossible for me to give information of the kind. But if my hon. Friend would give me due notice I would be able to indicate what the price of food is. For the information of the House I may say that the practice of the Indian Government in famine operations is to pay in money sums sufficient to provide what is known as a sustenance wage, and if the price of food is high the amount paid is in proportion.

MR. T. R. LEUTY (Leeds, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether, in view of the fact that people in India are admittedly dying of hunger in unknown numbers, and that such a state of things necessarily indicates considerable sufferings on the part of others not actually brought to death, he will take immediate steps to make more effective the work of famine relief?

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: The Question of the hon. Gentleman implies that the system of famine relief now in operation in India is ineffective and insufficient. No evidence, either official or unofficial, has reached me justifying this allegation. ["Hear, hear!"] In the middle of last month the Government of India telegraphed that "in all provinces relief arrangements were reported to be adequate and working well." Subsequent telegrams from the Government and unofficial information have confirmed that report. I am not at present aware of any steps that can be taken to make the work of relief more effective; if any such measures can be suggested they will be welcomed. I believe that the executive in India, their officers, and the large numbers of non-official workers now engaged in relief operations are doing all that can be done to mitigate distress, and the whole administrative and financial resources of the Government are behind them. A calamity so intense and widespread as that now afflicting India cannot be repelled without casualties and great privation; but never before in a scarcity of these dimensions have the general operations against famine been so successful as those being now carried on by Lord Elgin and his coadjutors. [*Cheers.*]

MR. LEUTY asked whether he correctly understood the noble Lord the other day that three months would be required to find out how many had died from famine, and whether he was right in inferring that people were dying in unknown numbers?

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: If the hon. Gentleman thinks that a calamity of these dimensions could pass over India without raising the mortality above the level which obtains in normal times he stands alone in that opinion. What I pointed out was, it was impossible to obtain in less than three months reliable information as to the mortality that has occurred; and I think it is better the officials administering relief should try and preserve the lives of those living than be burdened by collecting statistics of those who have died. ["Hear!"]

MR. LEUTY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India what relief is being given in the famine districts of India in the matter of payment of the land revenue; and what steps are being taken to preserve the cattle belonging to the suffering people in view of their future needs?

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: My latest information shows that (1) the Government of India expect their land revenue for the year ending on the 31st of this month to be Rx.2,300,000 short by reason of suspensions and remissions due to famine. These suspensions are apart from other losses of revenue and from the large sums spent on relief operations and on loans to landholders. (2) The Government forest reserves are being, or have been, opened for grazing wherever such a step was required for the cattle of famine-stricken tracts. In one province, a forest officer of experience has been deputed to help private dealers in making the best use of fodder available in the Government forests. Water from Government irrigation works is being made available, as far as practicable, for the production of fodder crops, and, generally, the Governments and the local officers are doing what is in their power to help in saving the people's cattle.

CUSTOMS
(ASSISTANTS AND OUTDOOR OFFICERS).

SIR JOHN STIRLING-MAXWELL (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he has received a Memorial presented to the Board of Customs by the assistants and outdoor officers of customs for transmission to the Treasury on 22nd November 1896; whether, seeing that the grievances cited in the said Memorial have been considered by their Lordships on two previous occasions, and that as a consequence the concessions asked for have been granted to future entrants, he is prepared to press for a readjustment of the salaries of the said officers at present serving in the Department, so that at the end of their eighth year of service, they may, like future entrants, receive a salary of £105 per annum; and whether, in the event of their demand being conceded, the readjustment of the said officers' salaries will date from 1st January 1896?

MR. HANBURY: The decision of the Treasury on the Memorial in question has been communicated to the Board of Customs, and certain concessions have been sanctioned in the case of officers who have been appointed since 1891, and whose position has been prejudicially affected by the abolition of classification. But the Treasury see no reason for granting to all officers indiscriminately a salary of £105 at the end of the eighth year of service.

ROYAL HORSE ARTILLERY
(6-CWT. GUN).

CAPTAIN JESSEL (St. Pancras, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether all the Royal Horse Artillery batteries in the United Kingdom have been supplied with the new 6-cwt. gun; and, if not, whether he can give information as to how soon the re-armament will be completed?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): In consequence of the contractor having failed to complete his contract by the specified time, four batteries are still without the new gun. I may explain that the guns have been delivered, but that the manufacturer has hitherto failed to produce wheels of the uniformly high quality required, such as are made in the Royal Arsenal. A proposal has been made to the contractor to complete the wheels in the Arsenal at his expense. If this is agreed to, delivery can take place in a few weeks.

ALLOTMENTS (NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL).

MR. H. H. COZENS-HARDY (Norfolk, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he is aware that the Binham Parish Council, being unable to hire by agreement suitable land for allotments, applied to the Norfolk County Council to make a compulsory order to enable them to hire 70 acres required for allotments; that the Norfolk County Council refused to make a compulsory order on the ground that labourers desiring allotments might deal separately with their employers; and that a large majority of the labourers have declined to hire land except from the Parish Council; and whether, under the circumstances, it is possible for the Parish Council to obtain compulsory powers to provide the land required for allotments?

THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. T. W. RUSSELL, Tyrone, S.): The Parish Council of Binham informed the Local Government Board that they had failed to hire land by agreement for allotments, and that the County Council had refused to take action on the requisition of the Parish Council for compulsory powers, and they asked the Board to intervene in the matter. The Board communicated with the County Council, and were informed that the Allotments Committee were satisfied that the Parish Council had had opportunities of acquiring land at a reasonable rate, of which they had declined to avail themselves, and the Committee, therefore, thought they could take no further action in the matter. The Board then wrote to the Parish Council stating that if they were desirous that the Board should intervene, with a view to overruling the decision of the County Council, they should formally petition the Board accordingly. The Board at the same time pointed out that some expense might be entailed on the parish by the proceedings consequent upon such a petition, and that under Section 10 (1) of the Local Government Act 1894, it was only when the Parish Council were satisfied that allotments were required, and were unable to hire by agreement on reasonable terms suitable land, that they were entitled to represent the case to the County Council. It was added that on the information then before the Board it was not clear that the above conditions were fulfilled. Subsequently, in September last the Parish Council withdrew their application to the Board, adding that they did so without prejudice to any future application they might wish to make. The Board have not since received any application from the Parish Council in the matter.

MONEY ORDERS (FRIENDLY SOCIETIES).

MR. S. WOODS (Essex, Walthamstow): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he has considered the hardship inflicted on members of Friendly Societies, consequent on the alteration recently made in the commission charged on money orders under 20s. in value; and whether, with a view of relieving this hardship, he is prepared to consider the advisability of reverting to the old system, viz., commission of 2d. on orders under 20s. in value.

MR. HANBURY: The affiliated societies I understand do not make any large use of money orders for the transmission of their remittances. The Hearts of Oak, which does do so, has for some reason directed its Members to remit small sums of 2s. 6d. and 1s., which could be remitted to them for 1d. and ½d. by postal orders crossed, or otherwise by money order costing even at 2d. twice or four times as much. If the case of this Society stood alone, the Postmaster General would not feel justified in reverting to the original charge of 2d., as all these Orders actually cost the Department 3d. But no doubt many persons of small means who transmit their wages or other sums to their families complain of the increased rate, and the Postmaster General is considering whether by reducing the cost to the Post Office he can reduce the commission on Orders for £1 and under to 2d., but legislation may be required to enable him to do so.

ENLISTMENT (ROYAL MUNSTER FUSILIERS).

MR. M. J. FLAVIN (Kerry, N): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War if he is aware that a boy named William O'Dell has recently enlisted in the Royal Munster Fusiliers at Tralee; and whether, in view of the fact that he is under the age of 18, and that no adequate inquiries were made by the police authorities of the family of the soldier as to his assistance being necessary for the support of the family, consisting of six people, as also of the permanent disablement of the soldier's father, his discharge will be ordered by the War Office authorities?

Mr. BRODRICK: As William O'Dell was up to the standard of enlistment, his retention or discharge rests with the general officer commanding the district. That officer, after making full inquiries, decided to retain him in the Army. It appears that his father is well able to work, and one of his sons is in good employment.

Mr. FLAVIN: Will the right hon. Gentleman say what is the prescribed age for recruits joining the Army?

Mr. BRODRICK: Eighteen. But if a young man is under 18, and is found to be well up to the standard, he is not then entitled to be discharged from the Army.

Mr. FLAVIN: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the birth certificate of this soldier has been sent to the War Office, showing that he is under 18 years of age?

Mr. BRODRICK: Yes; I have been so informed. He is under 18, but he is up to the standard of 18, and he is not entitled to be discharged.

Captain DONELAN (Cork, E.): Is there any limit as to age?

Mr. BRODRICK was understood to say that if a youth was under 17, it was usual to discharge him on discovering his age.

QUEEN'S REIGN (CRIMEAN AND INDIAN MUTINY VETERANS).

Sir JOHN LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether he will consider the practicability of associating the Crimean and Indian Mutiny veterans with the celebrations in honour of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee by selecting a detachment to form a guard to the children's stand in Hyde Park, or elsewhere, providing each man with a suitable uniform, and giving each a moderate gratuity on the day of the celebration?

Mr. BRODRICK: The suggestion in the hon. Member's Question will, with many others, be considered; but the selection of men to form such a detachment would present great difficulties, and it is impossible at this stage to give any undertaking in the matter.

LAND VALUATION.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) can he state to the House the nature of the instructions issued to Revising Officers of Valuation in Ireland; (2) whether they are empowered to value or revalue land; (3) whether, seeing that the last valuation of Ireland was made in 1854, when the value of agricultural products was much higher than it is to-day, the Government intend to have a valuation of the land of the Three Kingdoms, as was promised last Session; (4) and, if so, when?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. Gerald Balfour, Leeds, Central): The Revising Officers of the Valuation Department are instructed to revise the value of all rateable tenements and hereditaments which have been legally brought under the notice of the Department by the local rating authorities, or the ratepayers, in the manner prescribed by and in accordance with the provisions of the several Valuation Acts. The Acts provide that, whilst the value of all other rateable property may be altered, the total value of land in any townland cannot be changed. An adjustment, therefore, where the boundaries of holdings are altered, is all that is possible in land revision cases. I am not aware of any promise made by me as referred to in the last paragraph, but the question of a general revaluation of land in Ireland is, in my judgment, well worthy of consideration.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY (FORCE FUND).

Mr. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland can he state whether the Irish Government exercise any control over the management of the Constabulary Force Fund, and are the accounts of the Fund subject to audit; and is he aware that grave dissatisfaction exists as to its management?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The Constabulary Force Fund is administered by the Inspector-General under the direct control of the Lord Lieutenant, by whom all payments are authorised before they can be made. The Fund has been audited from the outset of its career by the Comptroller and Auditor General. I am not aware that grave or indeed any dissatisfaction exists as to the management of the Fund.

LAND SUB-COMMISSIONERS (CONNAUGHT).

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether there are but two legal assistant Land Sub-Commissioners in charge of the five counties of Connaught; how long is it since cases from Tubbercurry Union were heard; and when and where it is proposed to have another sitting to dispose of long-standing cases listed from that Union?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: Two legal assistant Commissioners are employed in Connaught as circumstances require; the number of such Commissioners at work in the several provinces is not, however, regulated by the number of counties in each province, but by the number of fair-rent applications received from each Poor Law Union. A Sub-Commission Court for the hearing of cases from the Tubbercurry Union sat on the 8th October last and disposed of all cases listed for hearing by that Sub-Commission. The hearing of a further list from this Union commences to-day at Manorhamilton.

EVICTED FARMS (MEETING AT CAHIR).

COLONEL SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Rev. Mr. O'Hara, P.P., a member of the Congested Districts Board, attended and was on the platform at a meeting recently held at Cahir, County Mayo, at which Mr. W. O'Brien strongly advocated boycotting landgrabbers, and that the Rev. Mr. O'Hara addressed the meeting, and said the speech of William O'Brien reminded him of the good old times; and whether the Government propose taking any further steps to prevent such intimidation?

The HON. MEMBER also asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—(1) whether he is aware that since the meeting held recently at Cahir, County Mayo, at which landgrabbers were denounced, the two persons denounced as landgrabbers, on whose farms the meeting was held, have been boycotted, and refused provisions in the locality; (2) whether he is aware that the attendance of children at the national school in the neighbourhood has largely fallen off owing to the presence of the landgrabbers' children; and (3) whether, seeing that it has been found necessary to draft a large number of police to the district on Sundays to protect these men going to and returning from mass, he will state what steps the Government intend to take to prevent and punish this mode of intimidation?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: In answer to the first Question, it is a fact that the Rev. Mr. O'Hara was on the platform with Mr. O'Brien on the occasion referred to, and addressed the meeting; but, save for the report in the *Freeman's Journal* newspaper, we have no evidence that he used the language attributed to him. The Government have given directions that a shorthand writer should in future attend any meetings of a similar character that may be held in this district—[*cries of* "Oh"!]—and, should sufficient evidence be forthcoming, the Government will not hesitate to enforce the law against any person violating it. [*Ironical Irish cheers.*] In reply to the second Question, it does not appear from the report appearing in the *Freeman's Journal* that any persons were denounced by name, but it is the fact that the two persons in occupation of evicted farms, on one of which the meeting was held, have been boycotted and refused provisions in the locality. The facts are also substantially as stated in the second and third paragraphs. Police protection of the most ample character is being given to the boycotted persons, and all further steps that may appear necessary will be taken to prevent and punish injury and outrage of any kind. [*Ironical Irish cheers.*]

MR. JOHN MORLEY (Montrose Burghs): Can the right hon. Gentleman tell us when was the last occasion that a shorthand writer was sent to take notes of a public meeting in Ireland?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: I do not think it has happened since I have had the honour of holding my present office.

Mr. JOHN DILLON (Mayo, E.): Will the right hon. Gentleman kindly inform us, in connection with the sending of shorthand writers to meetings in Ireland, whether the abominable system is to be reintroduced of surrounding them in the midst of the meetings with bodies of police with deadly weapons in their hands? [*Ministerial laughter.*]

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: It is necessary that a shorthand writer sent to attend a meeting should receive adequate protection.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): With reference to the statement that no person was denounced by name in the speech, I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether I was not very largely denounced in that speech? [*Laughter.*]

Mr. DILLON: As the practice is now being recognised of sending shorthand writers to meetings in Ireland, I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he will give us any assurance that they will not be forced into the middle of the crowd surrounded by police?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: Whatever provisions may be necessary to enable the shorthand writer to take his notes will of course be made. ["Hear, hear."] I may say in connection with what has fallen from the hon. Member that, while we have directed that a shorthand writer should attend meetings of a similar description to that addressed by Mr. O'Brien in this district, at present, at all events, and I hope in the future, it will not be necessary to extend it beyond that.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): Will the right hon. Gentleman say that he will not introduce to these meetings his old friends the constabulary notetakers.

[No answer was given.]

LAND TAX.

Mr. G. H. MORRELL (Oxon, Woodstock): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether Land Tax redeemed but not exonerated, and therefore continued on the assessment, comes within the operation of Section 31 of the Finance Act 1896; whether the occupier of land on which this is charged can be called upon to pay more than 1s. in the pound on the annual value of the land; and whether provision for compensation to the redemptioner upon a diminution taking place, in consequence of the above 1s. limitation is still contemplated in the direction of his receiving back the difference from the receiving officer or a proportionate amount of the capital stock originally transferred for redemption?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir Michael Hicks Beach, Bristol, W.) said: Properties on which the Land Tax has been redeemed but not exonerated continue subject to assessment at the same rate as other unexonerated properties in the same parish, and may or may not be affected by the provisions of Section 31 of the Finance Act of 1896. In any parish where a portion of the *quota* is remitted under this section properties on which the tax has been redeemed but not exonerated will share in the remission. The purchaser of the tax, however, is entitled to receive the full amount of the tax redeemed in the contract under which he claims, and this right is not affected by the Finance Act of 1896.

M'MATH ESTATE (CO. MONAGHAN).

Mr. JAMES DALY (Monaghan, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he is aware that a solicitor, named Mr. Giffard, representing the M'Math Estate (which is in Chancery), County Monaghan, agreed with the tenants to sell them their holdings through the Irish Land Commissioners, and that, having arranged to meet the tenants from the townlands of Formill and Killkit at Ballybay on the 26th September 1896, for the purpose of carrying out the sale, Mr. Giffard did not attend while the tenants did; (2) whether he can state if it is the Irish Land Commissioners or the representatives of the M'Math Estate that are to blame for the delay in carrying out the sale to the tenants; and (3) whether he will stay any proceedings for rent against the tenants mentioned pending the completion of the sale.

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: No applications for advances have been received by the Land Commission in respect of this property. A petition for the sale of the land is, however, pending in the Land Judge's Court, but neither that Court nor the Land Commission is cognisant of any dealings with the tenants such as alleged in the Question. I have no power to act in the manner suggested in the last paragraph.

GRANGEGORMAN PRISON.

Mr. J. L. CAREW (Dublin, College Green): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland —(1) whether he is aware that the officers of the Grangegorman Prison, who were refused fuel had to be on duty in the halls and corridors from 6 to 10 p.m., the coldest period of the day, whereas none of the officers who were allowed fuel had to perform this duty; (2) what is the legal status of the superintendent; (3) whether, though it is contrary to law (7 George 4, c. 74), for a female to be the keeper of any prison, she is looked to as the officer in charge; and (4) whether though in compliance with the statute she is not permitted to hear and determine reports against prisoners for breaches of discipline, yet she determines complaints against officers, male or female, even to inflicting fines?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: The facts are as stated in the first paragraph, though it is to be observed that the prison is heated in the cells and corridors, and that two of the three matrons who are allowed fuel in their bedrooms do not usually perform the particular duty referred to. Grangegorman is primarily a convict prison, and as such is free from the disability pointed out in the Question—the Act quoted not being applicable to convict prisons. The present superintendent holds the appointment under the same conditions as her predecessor, and is looked to as the officer in charge of the whole prison, though disciplinary punishments on local prisoners are inflicted by the chief warder. She hears and determines reports against convicts, and in the exercise of the disciplinary authority delegated to her by the Prisons Board as regards prison officers serving under her orders, she determines complaints against officers, male and female, and inflicts fines upon them.

BLACKSHADE'S RAILWAY AND CANAL BRIDGE (CO. NEATH).

Mr. CAREW: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he is aware that the wing walls of Blackshade's Railway and Canal Bridge on the road between Clonard and Trim, County Meath, are in a very dilapidated and dangerous condition; that there is a breach in the northwest wall level with the road from which there is a drop of 20 feet; (2) whether he is aware that the secretary to the Grand Jury of the county called the attention of the Railway Company to the state of the bridge two years ago, but they have done nothing up to the present; (3) and whether he will ascertain who is responsible for the repairs, and direct them to be executed?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: The facts, I understand, are accurately stated in the first paragraph, but I have no official knowledge of any communications that may have passed between the Secretary to the Grand Jury and the Railway Company in the matter. The question of responsibility for the execution of repairs is not one in which I can express an opinion, nor have I any means of ascertaining upon whom the responsibility rests, but I have directed that a copy of the hon. Member's Question be referred to the Secretary to the Grand Jury.

BRIGADE OF GUARDS (RECRUITING STANDARD).

Captain GREVILLE (Bradford, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War what is the present minimum standard of height for recruits for the brigade of Guards; and whether it is intended, in view of the addition of two new battalions and the institution of new conditions as regards liability to foreign service, to alter or reduce the present standard; if so, will he state the intended minimum standard?

Mr. BRODRICK: The standard minimum height for the brigade of Guards is 5 ft. 8½ ins., and there is no present intention of altering or reducing it.

SCIENCE AND ART DEPARTMENT AND SCOTCH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

MR. C. B. RENSHAW (Renfrew, W.): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether any decision has yet been arrived at as to the future relations of the Science and Art Department and the Scotch Education Department; and, if so, whether he can state what the arrangement is?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire): A Departmental Committee has lately been considering the question of the grants from the Science and Art Department, and it was thought better to defer the question of the relations between that Department and the Scotch Education Department until the Committee had reported. I understand that it will report shortly, and the matter, which has not been lost sight of, will then receive further consideration.

COTTON CLOTH FACTORIES ACT.

MR. ASCROFT (Oldham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will consider the advisability of introducing a Bill, at as early a date as possible, with a view to carrying out the recommendations made by the Committee appointed to inquire into the working of the Cotton Cloth Factories Act 1889, etc., for the preservation of the health of the workpeople employed in the textile industries, or whether the Government will be prepared to support such a Bill, if introduced by a private Member?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY, Lancashire, Blackpool): There has not been sufficient time as yet for the full and proper consideration of the Committee's recommendations; but they are being carefully considered at the present moment, and, of course, I shall be glad to consider at the same time any suggestions which hon. Members may desire to make.

BURMAH.

SIR ANDREW SCOBLE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether it is intended to constitute a Lieutenant Governorship for the province of Burmah, and to establish Legislative Councils in the Panjab and Burmah; and whether he is able to give the House any information as to the constitution and powers of those Councils?

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: It has been decided that local Legislative Councils shall be established both for Punjab and for Burmah, and as soon as the formal proclamations have issued the Chief Commissioner of the latter province will be appointed to be a Lieutenant Governor. There will be nine members of council for each Legislature—four of whom will be non-officials. For the present they will all be nominated. The powers to be given to these councils will be gradually extended, as we gain experience of their working; but it is not proposed in the first instance to give them the larger powers which, under the Act of 1892 may be conferred by rule or regulation.

LUNACY COMMISSIONERS' REPORT.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention has been drawn to the Supplement of the 50th Report of the Commissioners in Lunacy (No. 304 I.), which contains 11 elaborate plans, about three feet by two feet each, in great detail, of five lunatic asylums now being erected; by what authority it was printed; and whether he could state the cost of producing this volume with these expensive plans?

MR. HANBURY: The printing of Returns is by a fiction supposed to rest with the House, but such discretion as is employed is, in fact, usually exercised by the Librarian. The discretion of the Librarian is, however, itself limited by the fact that annual reports, such as that of the Lunacy Commissioners, are frequently laid on the Table in dummy. His discretion has taken the place of that of the Printing Committee of the House, which, however, never expressed any opinion during the last 20 years of its existence. In this instance the Librarian advised the printing of the original Report of the Lunacy Commissioners because it was the annual custom to do so, and the order to print the ordinary Report was supposed to include this special and additional Report. The Stationery Office can control the amount of illustration in Command Papers, but has no authority over those printed by Order of the House. 750 copies of the Supplement were printed, of which, 200 were sent to the Vote Office for delivery to Members. A further 350 were subsequently printed for the use of the Lunacy Commissioners. Though the selling price is stated on the cover to be 5s. 7½d., I am informed by the Stationery Office that the total cost was only £59 0s. 9d., which I do not understand, if copies are sold at about cost price. That a good deal is printed as a matter of routine, which is of little use to anybody, appears very probable, but that is a matter for the House, and not the Treasury, to deal with.

MR. BARTLEY: I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether some steps will be taken to prevent this waste of public money in the future?

MR. HANBURY: It is entirely in the discretion of the House.

BURMAH-SIAM-CHINA RAILWAY.

MR. C. E. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India what action the Government of India has taken, in fulfilment of the promises given by the Prime Minister, on behalf of the Home and Indian Governments, to the deputation of the Associated Chambers of Commerce in June last, and subsequent memorial of the Chambers, to carry out at State expense the necessary surveys, levels, and estimates for the section of the projected Burmah-Siam-China Railway leading from the Burmese seaport of Moulmien to the Siamese frontier, in order to enable some powerful and solvent company to undertake and execute this section of the line?

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: The statement made by the Prime Minister to the deputation from the Associated Chambers of Commerce on June 12 last, was to the effect that if a powerful and solvent company were formed for the suggested Burmah-Siam-China Railway such assistance as was deemed possible by Government would be given towards the construction of that portion of the line which lay in British Indian territory. In pursuance of this undertaking the views of the Chambers of Commerce in support of the project were transmitted to the Government of India in August last for an expression of their opinion. That Government have recently replied deprecating any expenditure from Indian revenues which might commit them to the execution of this project until the manner in which such a line is to be financed has been discussed and determined.

MR. SCHWANN: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the new Burmah Frontier Treaty provides for the retrocession by China to the British of the Shan State of Kiang Hung, and for the extension of the projected Burmah-Siam-China Railway and other railways from our Burmese dominions into the neighbouring provinces of China; and, when the Treaty will be laid upon the Table of the House?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. GEORGE CURZON, Lancashire, Southport): Under the Burmah Frontier Convention, as revised, certain territorial compensations, including the State of Kokang, are made to Great Britain for the violation by the Chinese Government of that portion of the original agreement that related to Kiang Hung. It is further agreed that, if railways be constructed in Yun-nan, they shall be connected with any Burmese lines that may have been laid to the frontier. I cannot at present answer the third question, as the Treaty has not yet reached our hands.

LOUGH SWILLY RAILWAY COMPANY.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): On behalf of the hon. Member for Dublin, St. Patrick (Mr. W. FIELD), I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he is aware that, although the Lough Swilly Railway Company has got a sufficient grant of about £90,000 for making extensions of line from Buncrana to Cardonagh, the Company propose to ask the Grand Jury of Donegal on Friday the 12th instant for an additional guarantee of £2,000 per annum as a perpetual tax; (2) whether he is aware that some time since this Company was prepared to make the line for £60,000 and a guarantee of £15,000; and (3) whether the Government sanction the action of the Company in asking for a guarantee from a poor and congested district, as there is sufficient money for making the line?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The statements in the first part of the Question are not accurate. The amount of the grant will depend upon the amount of the tender, but in any case the Lough Swilly Railway Company will provide the rolling stock up to a maximum cost of £15,000. Moreover, the interest payable on the County Guarantee will not exceed £250 per annum, and may not even amount to £200. If a railway is to be built at all, the County must give a guarantee, and in this case the amount has been fixed with reference to the necessity of satisfying the provision of the Act of 1896 that the locality should give reasonable assistance to the undertaking. I am not aware of the facts stated in the second paragraph.

DAUNT'S ROCK LIGHTSHIP.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN: On behalf of the hon. Member for Dublin, St. Patrick (Mr. W. FIELD), I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can state where the *Puffin* inquiry will be held, and what is the date fixed; and, whether the same solicitor is to act for the Board of Trade and the Irish Lights Board?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. C. T. RITCHIE, Croydon): The Inquiry in the case of the *Puffin* is fixed for hearing at the Four Courts, Dublin, on the 16th instant, at noon. The solicitor conducting the Inquiry on behalf of the Board of Trade will not represent the Irish Lights Commissioners.

MR. MICHAEL AUSTIN (Limerick, W.): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, as most of the witnesses come from Cork and Queenstown, it would not be wise to hold the Inquiry at Cork?

MR. RITCHIE: I am not aware of the places from which the witnesses are most likely to come, but it has been decided that Dublin is the best place to hold the Inquiry.

MR. MAURICE HEALY (Cork): Who came to that decision?

MR. RITCHIE: The Irish Lights Commissioners.

MR. MAURICE HEALY: Are they not practically the accused in this case?

MR. RITCHIE: I do not think it is suggested that they wish for anything but a perfectly fair and open Inquiry.

MR. AUSTIN: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the witnesses from Cork and Limerick have to go to Dublin at their own expense?

METROPOLITAN POOR LAW SCHOOLS.

MR. E. H. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, inasmuch as the priority given to the Education Bill has deprived the House of an opportunity which had been obtained for the discussion of his draft Order relating to Metropolitan Poor Law Schools, he will postpone the final issue of the Order until the House has been enabled to consider the matter, either on the Vote for the Local Government Board or on some other occasion?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: The President of the Local Government Board sees no sufficient reason for deferring a decision with regard to this matter, and he cannot give any such assurance as is suggested.

MR. PICKERSGILL: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, inasmuch as the priority given to the Education Bill has deprived the House of an opportunity which had been obtained for the discussion of the draft Order of the President of the Local Government Board respecting Metropolitan Poor Law Schools, he will bring on the Vote for the Local Government Board on an early date, so that an opportunity may thus be afforded for considering the matter of the Order?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I cannot give any pledge as to when the Vote of the Local Government Board will come on. But I think it comes generally within the statement I made on a previous occasion—namely, that important Votes put off till the end of last Session should have some advantage in point of priority in the course of the present Session.

NAZIM PASHA.

MR. J. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Nazim Pasha, the Minister of Police during the massacres at Constantinople, has been appointed Governor General of the Province of Beyrout; and whether this appointment has been made under the system of reformed administration guaranteed by the Ottoman Porte?

MR. CURZON: We have received no official information of the appointment.

FIRST ARMY CORPS (DIVISIONAL ARTILLERY).

Major RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether any batteries, with a complement of four guns, are comprised in the Corps or Divisional Artillery of the First Army Corps?

Mr. BRODRICK: Twelve field batteries are kept on the full establishment of six guns horsed. The number of these comprised in the First Army Corps is at present six. The batteries with four guns horsed would be raised to six at once on mobilisation. All the guns for 45 batteries are kept constantly ready with the authorised Reserve.

MILITARY CADETS.

Mr. BARTLEY: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether the Gentlemen Cadets who left the Royal Academy, Woolwich, in December last, have yet received their commissions; and, if not, when they will do so?

Mr. BRODRICK: The Gentlemen Cadets referred to will be commissioned from the 23rd of the present month.

CRETE.

Mr. J. C. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Collective Note of the Great Powers was presented to the Porte on the 4th instant, and the Supplementary Note, respecting the progressive reduction of the Ottoman forces, on the 5th instant; on what date was the Identic Note presented to the Greek Government; and if he can say why the Collective Notes were not presented simultaneously to the Porte and to the Greek Government?

Mr. CURZON: The hon. Member will see by reference to the papers that the Collective Note to the Porte and the Identic Note to the Greek Government were not presented on different days, but on the same day—viz., the 2nd instant. The Supplementary Note to the Porte was presented on the 5th instant, not having received the sanction of all the Powers at the date of the presentation of the original Note.

Sir ELLIS ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can now state the replies of the Turkish and Greek Governments to the Notes of the Great Powers?

Mr. CURZON: The reply of the Porte was received on the 7th instant, and that of the Greek Government this morning. The substance of both replies has appeared in the newspapers.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Can the right hon. Gentleman give us generally a summary of the reply of the Porte? I have not seen it in the newspapers. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!" *and laughter.*]

*Sir W. HARCOURT (Monmouthshire, W.): Will the text of the Notes be laid on the Table?

Mr. CURZON: I am not aware that there will be any objection to do so; but if the right hon. Gentleman will allow me I will ask.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: I asked the right hon. Gentleman a Question. Will he answer? Has the Porte accepted the Note of the Powers?

Mr. CURZON: Yes, Sir, it has. As to the general character of the reply, I should hesitate to give from memory even a general summary.

Mr. THOMAS BAYLEY (Derbyshire, Chesterfield): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if the Government, in arranging with the other Great Powers for the temporary occupation of the Island of Crete by Turkish soldiers and civil servants, will see that proper guarantees are given for their fair, reasonable, and regular payment?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: I do not admit that the phrase "temporary occupation of the Island of Crete by Turkish soldiers," represents accurately the policy of the Powers. Of course we are fully alive to the necessity of securing that the new gendarmerie shall be a well-ordered and disciplined force.

Mr. BAYLEY: And well paid?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: You cannot have a well-ordered and disciplined force unless they are well paid. [*Laughter.*]

Mr. MACNEILL: I wish to ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs a Question of which I have given him private notice, and of which I have taken the precaution to keep a copy. [*Laughter.*] I wish to ask whether Lord

Salisbury will give an assurance analogous to that given yesterday by the French Prime Minister—[*cheers*]—that no action of a hostile or coercive character will be taken against Greece by the Naval or Military forces of the Crown without the full approval of the Imperial Parliament? [*Cheers.*]

MR. CURZON: With all respect to the hon. Gentleman and to the House, I must hold myself excused from answering questions of which hon. Gentlemen affect to give private notice, although their private notice seldom or never reaches me before I have taken my seat on this Bench. [*Cheers.*] Private notice ought also to be adequate notice. [*Cheers.*]

MR. MACNEILL: As a matter of explanation, I may say that I sent the notice before one o'clock to the right hon. Gentleman. Would it be for his convenience if I put the Question down for Thursday? As it is a question of urgency, will he communicate with Lord Salisbury?

MR. CURZON: The hon. Gentleman can put down any question he pleases. It is not within my province to advise him. [*Cheers.*]

MR. H. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): Will the First Lord of the Treasury answer the Question, of which I have not been able to give him private notice? [*Laughter.*] It is whether he has seen a statement by M. Méline, the French Prime Minister, in the Chamber yesterday, that he will communicate to the Chamber the intentions of the Powers on Wednesday or Thursday; and whether we can hope for a similar communication at the same time in this House? [*Cheers.*]

SIR W. HARCOURT: I quite understand the difficulty which the Government may have in answering the Question at this moment; but I propose myself to ask a question of the Government on the Motion for Adjournment to-night. [*Cheers.*]

MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): I beg to ask the Under Secretary or the First Lord of the Admiralty whether there is any news to communicate to the House with regard to the forces landed to rescue the loyal garrison?

MR. CURZON: I do not know whether the First Lord of the Admiralty has any news, but I am sorry to say that the Foreign Office has received none.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) asked the First Commissioner of Works whether he was aware that there was no detailed map of Crete in the Library, and whether he would get the Admiralty chart of Crete and have it hung up in the tea-room?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. AKERS-DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's): That is a question which must be addressed to the Foreign Office.

ESTATES RETURN (IRELAND).

MR. MAURICE HEALY: I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether the first Return of estates to which Section 40 of the Land Law (Ireland) Act 1881 is to be first applied, as directed by the rules under that section (namely, a Return of estates over which a Receiver was appointed in or prior to the year 1881) has yet been prepared; and, if not, when it is likely to be ready?

*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. ATKINSON, Londonderry, N.): The Registrar of the Land Judges Court states that the Return in question has been prepared, and that communications are now passing between the Land Court and Land Commission in reference to it. It will, I hope, be completed in a few days.

MR. MAURICE HEALY: May I ask whether the Return, when it is prepared, will be printed, and whether, in view of its general interest, we will have it laid on the Table of the House?

*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND: Yes, Sir.

IRISH MAIL SERVICE.

MR. MAURICE HEALY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether any step has been, or will be, taken in connection with the improved mail service between England and Ireland to introduce an improved method of transhipping the mails at Kingstown and Holyhead?

MR. HANBURY: No step has been taken to introduce an improved method of transhipping the mails at Kingstown and Holyhead in connection with the improved service between England and Ireland, which is to commence on the

1st prox. The matter has been considered from time to time for many years past, but no plans have, up to the present, been proposed which meet with the concurrence of all parties concerned. The question is full of difficulty; but the Post Office is prepared to consider favourably any fresh plans on which the railway company and the packet company may be in agreement.

DANISH TRAWLERS IN SCOTTISH WATERS.

CAPTAIN PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade (1) whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that the Danish trawler *Dania* has been constantly fishing for the last few weeks in the Moray Firth, and that the Secretary for Scotland has given instructions to prevent the landing or sale in Scotland of the fish caught by this vessel within the area prohibited by the Scotch Fishery byelaws; and (2) whether the Board of Trade will issue instructions to prevent the fish so caught from being landed or sold in English ports, and thus effectively avoid the evasion of the Scotch Fishery byelaws and the consequent serious injury to British fishing interests?

MR. RITCHIE: I have no information as to the circumstances referred to in the first part of the Question. I have no power to prevent the landing or sale in English ports of the fish which the *Dania* may have taken.

CAPTAIN PIRIE: Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether any steps can be taken to stop foreign trawlers fishing in these waters to the detriment of British industries?

MR. RITCHIE: The Lord Advocate answered yesterday, in reply to the hon. Gentleman, that, so far as he was concerned, he had no power to stop the sale of the fish in Scottish ports, and I have no power in the case of the English ports.

CAPTAIN PIRIE: The Lord Advocate did not answer me yesterday. He attempted to answer three Questions in one reply, but he did not succeed. I will call attention to this matter again.

FAIR RENTS (IRELAND).

COLONEL SAUNDERSON: On behalf of the hon. Member for Dublin University (Mr. E. CARSON), I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that the Land Commission in Ireland have purported to fix fair rents in a number of cases without specifying the details required by the schedule enacted in the Act of last year; and, if so, in how many cases this has occurred; (2) whether Her Majesty's Court of Appeal has decided that such details are necessary, and that the omission of them invalidates the orders; (3) what course the Land Commission intend to take with reference to cases in which such omission has occurred; and (4) whether there is any power of awarding costs against the Land Commission in appeals taken to rectify such omissions; if not, how the costs are borne?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The cases referred to in the first paragraph were cases in which fair rents had been fixed prior to the passing of the Act of 1896, and in which, consequently, no schedules had been recorded. The Land Commission cannot state in how many cases this occurred without examining the files in every appeal disposed of since the passing of the Act of 1896, and such an examination would occupy a considerable time. The Court of Appeal on February1, upon a case stated by the Land Commission, decided that the Commission were bound to record a schedule of particulars under the Act of 1896, in cases in which the rents had been fixed before the passing of the said Act, and which came before the Land Commission on rehearing or appeal subsequent to the passing of the Act. The Land Commission in every case subsequently heard by them have recorded a schedule of particulars. The Court of Appeal did not, in the case referred to, decide any question other than that already mentioned. The third paragraph of the question refers to matters which may come before the Land Commission in a judicial capacity, and they cannot express any opinion upon them until they have come before them for their determination. In the cases referred to the Land Commission were acting judicially, and there is no more power of awarding costs against them than there is of awarding costs against the Queen's Bench Division or any other Court whose decisions are reversed by the Court of Appeal.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, when the Land Commission make an admitted blunder, which puts both landlords and tenants to enormous expense, the Treasury would provide the costs, seeing that the mistake arose through the erroneous conception of the Land Commission?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: In that respect the Land Commission stand in the same position as any other Law Court in the country.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman, does any other Court in the land initiate proceedings?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

ADULTERATION (FOOD PRODUCTS).

Mr. HUDSON KEARLEY (Devonport): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Government have come to any decision as to the introduction this Session of a Bill to carry out the recommendations of the Select Committee on Food Products Adulteration?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: I think the hon. Member for North Galway asked a question on this subject not many days ago, of my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Agriculture. My right hon. Friend answered that the introduction of the Bill referred to must depend upon the progress of public business. I am afraid I cannot add anything to that answer at the present time.

Mr. KEARLEY: Has the right hon. Gentleman received a representation from the President of the Board of Agriculture in regard to a deputation that waited on him?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: The answer given by my right hon. Friend was not on the Minutes of Legislation on Food Products Adulteration, but on the condition of the House of Commons, of which I fear, we are better informed than the deputation.

ROYAL PATRIOTIC FUND.

Mr. KEARLEY: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury what steps are being taken by the Government to provide for a full administration of the surplus assets controlled by the Commissioners of the Royal Patriotic Fund, and to reform the Commission, in accordance with the recommendations of the Select Committtee as reported in August last?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: The grant of a revised Commission, by which it is proposed to carry into effect the recommendation of the Select Committee, is at present under consideration, and will shortly be issued.

RIVERS POLLUTION PREVENTION BILL.

Second Reading deferred from Tomorrow till Wednesday, 17th March.

LONDON WATER COMPANIES AMALGAMATION BILL.

Second Reading deferred from Tomorrow till Wednesday, 17th March.

MOTIONS.

BAKEHOUSES.

Bill to restrict the hours of labour in Bakehouses to forty-eight hours per week, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Woods, Mr. John Burns, Mr. Lough, Mr. Holburn, Mr. Samuel, and Mr. Arch; presented, and Read the First time; to be Read a Second time upon Tuesday, 23rd March, and to be printed.—[Bill 152.]

TITHE REDEMPTION.

Bill for the purposes of Tithe Redemption, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Jeffreys, Mr. Cripps, Sir John Dorington, Mr. Channing, Mr. Hobhouse, and Mr. Lambert; presented, and Read the First time; to be read a Second time upon Wednesday, 17th March, and to be printed.—[Bill 153.]

COTTON, CLOTH, AND OTHER FACTORIES.

Bill to amend the Law relating to Cotton, Cloth, and other Textile Factories, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Ascroft and Mr. Kemp; presented, and Read the First time; to be Read a Second time upon Wednesday, 26th May, and to be printed.—[Bill 154.]

MARKET GARDENERS' COMPENSATION (SCOTLAND).

Bill to amend the provisions of The Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1883, so far as they relate to Market Gardens, ordered to be brought in by Sir Thomas Gibson-Carmichael, Mr. Haldane, Earl of Dalkeith, Sir John Kinloch, Mr. M'Killop, Mr. Munrō Ferguson, and Sir Lewis M'Iver; presented, and Read the First time; to be Read a Second time upon Tuesday, 23rd March, and to be printed.—[Bill 155.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS BILL.

Considered in Committee.

[The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS, Mr. J. W. LOWTHER, in the Chair.]

(PROGRESS, 8TH MARCH.—SIXTH DAY.]

Clause 1,—

AID GRANT TO VOLUNTARY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

"(1) For aiding Voluntary Schools there shall be annually paid out of moneys provided by Parliament an aid grant, not exceeding in the aggregate 5s. per scholar for the whole number of scholars in those schools.

"(2) The aid grant shall be distributed by the Education Department to such Voluntary Schools and in such manner and amounts as the Department think best for the purpose of helping necessitous schools and increasing their efficiency, due regard being had to the maintenance of voluntary subscriptions.

"(3) If associations of schools are constituted in such manner in such areas and with such governing bodies representative of the managers as are approved by the Education Department, there shall be allotted to each association while so approved,

"(*a*) a share of the aid grant to be computed according to the number of scholars in the schools of the association at the rate of 5s. per scholar, or, if the Department fix different rates for town and country schools respectively (which they are hereby empowered to do) then at those rates; and

"(*b*) a corresponding share of any sum which may be available out of the aid grant after distribution has been made to unassociated schools.

"(4) The share so allotted to each such association shall be distributed as aforesaid by the Education Department after consulting the governing body of the association, and in accordance with any scheme prepared by that body which the Department for the time being approve.

"(5) The Education Department may exclude a school from any share of the aid grant which it might otherwise receive, if, in the opinion of the Department, it unreasonably refuses or fails to join such an association, but the refusal or failure shall not be deemed unreasonable if the majority of the schools in the association belong to a religious denomination to which the school in question does not itself belong.

"(6) The Education Department may require as a condition of a school receiving a share of the aid grant, that the accounts of the receipts and expenditure of the school shall be annually audited in accordance with the regulations of the Department.

"(7) The decision of the Education Department upon any question relating to the distribution or allotment of the aid grant, including the question whether an association is or is not in conformity with this Act, and whether a school is a town or a country school, shall be final."

Amendment proposed [8th March] in Sub-section (2) to leave out the words "due regard being had to the maintenance of voluntary subscriptions," in order to insert the words—

"provided that no school shall be so helped the voluntary subscriptions in support of which fall short of the average of the past three years."—(*Mr. Lambert.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

Debate resumed.

MR. T. W. NUSSEY (Pontefract) said that the principle of Mr. Forster was to stimulate, and not to discourage, local effort. His idea was that of the school expenditure, one-third should be contributed by fees, one-third by local subscriptions, and one-third by the Government grant. The Act of 1870 made an advance on that principle, by making it possible that the Imperial grant should rise to one-half of the expenditure. In 1876 the principle of Voluntary Schools was entirely abandoned, and since then fees had come to be reckoned as voluntary subscriptions. The result had been that subscriptions had fallen in proportion to the expenditure to a great extent. In 1870 they amounted to 62 per cent., and now they had fallen to 26 per cent. of the whole expenditure. In 1870 the Government grant was 38 per cent. of the whole expenditure, and it had risen steadily until now it was 74 per cent. This clause would have a two-fold effect. It would lead to a large decrease in the annual contributions, and in all local effort. The present Archbishop of Canterbury had said:—

"If the ratio borne by the grant to subscriptions were increased, a very large amount of money would be immediately absorbed in the shrinking of local subscriptions without any effect on education at all."

Another effect of the Bill would be a large increase in the number of those Voluntary Schools which were entirely carried on by the aid of the Imperial funds. There ought to be a difference between the amount paid by the State, and the amount necessary for carrying on the schools properly. If the school had for its management a popularly elected body, the difference could be properly made up by the rates. But if the management were entirely private, the managers ought to prove that the school was wanted by the parents, and that they were in touch with local feeling. The difference to which he had alluded ought to be made up by local subscriptions, and the Government ought to put in the more definite words to secure this object. One of the evils of a too highly centralised educational system was, in the first place, a very great waste by the local authority. The fact that the local authority were spending State money and not ratepayers' money would gradually but surely lead them into waste. No supervision by the central authority would prevent this. Again, if they had a too highly centralised system, there must be a certain tyranny on the part of the central authority. It naturally tried to frame rules to guard the trust placed in its hands, and while those rules were doubtless good for the mass, they must press hardly on individual schools, and the Department dare not make relaxations to meet such cases. Voluntary Schools were maintained, not on account of any legal obligation whatsoever, because the State was willing to provide, and did provide, a sufficient education. There were two classes who supported the Voluntary Schools. First, there was the parsimonious class—those who were animated, not by religious zeal, but by fear of the expense which a School Board might entail. Secondly, there were those who wanted something which the State did not supply. They wanted denominational teaching, and they also wanted control of the management. Surely Parliament would not be asking too much if it insisted that there should be some modicum of subscriptions to show that the supporters of Voluntary Schools were ready to make some sacrifice for the faith which they professed. For these and other reasons he supported the Amendment.

*Mr. R.W.PERKS (Lincolnshire, Louth) said he was one of those who was not unwilling to see the voluntary subscriptions dwindle away to a vanishing point, so that the day might be hastened when sectarian schols would be forced into submitting to some measure of public control. But the Committee had passed those clauses which required them to aid the Voluntary Schools, and so he felt bound to endeavour so to frame the Bill as to insure the revenues being maintained, and therefore he supported the Amendment. They had had a singular exhibition on the Treasury Bench of the facility with which sometimes the Government accepted the advice of their clerical advisers and sometimes rejected it altogether. When they were dealing with federated associations, which was the invention of the Clerical Party, they accepted it with avidity, and apparently dared not suggest the slightest modification; but when they came to those provisions now under discussion, which the high authorities of the Church of England had not only distinctly recommended but offered to put in as protective clauses, they rejected *in toto* the advice given by their clerical advisers. They had had no definitions of any clear nature accepted in connection with the phraseology of the Bill. What was the meaning of the slovenly clause which said "due regard" must be had to the voluntary subscriptions? Was it suggested that the Department might give undue regard to certain schools? They were told yesterday that they need be under no fear of voluntary subscriptions falling away, and the right hon. Gentleman said that was not the effect in 1876. But how was that? It was because in 1876 proper provisions were inserted in the Bill, whereas now they wiped away the 17s. 6d. limit and therefore removed the stimulus arising from that protection. But nothing could be more confusing to managers of schools than this absolute uncertainty as to the principles on which they were to conduct the finance of their schools. How was the manager of a new school that might be started under this Bill to know how to frame his scheme if there was to be this absolute uncertainty as to income? There was a great deal of uncertainty in other ways about these subscriptions. He knew a case in the county of Kent, where, a few years ago, an American, who was supposed to be wealthy, took the house of a Kentish landed proprietor on agreement, and at once set an example to the parishioners by promising a considerable subscription to the parish school. Due regard was paid to the parish school. "Due regard" was paid to him in the parish magazine, and he was held up as a pattern to the neighbouring farmers who subscribed their shillings and noble landowners who subscribed their pounds. But suddenly, and at night, this American subscriber departed for the Far West; the parish saw him no more, and the school never received the subscription. There was no certainty at all in this source of revenue. They were asked the other day why they thought that, from a public point of view, there should be some guarantee that a fair proportion of the school revenue should come from the Church of England. It was for the reason that these schools were used for a variety of parochial and church purposes outside the provision of education, and it was reasonable to call upon those for support who derived the chief share of the advantages. It seemed to him on this ground only fair to insist on some proper provision in this extremely misty, nebulous Measure for maintaining a proper proportion of voluntary subscriptions.

*Mr. T. G. ASHTON (Beds, Luton) supported the Amendment, though he did not care for its wording. But if subscriptions to Voluntary Schools were to be maintained at all it would be absolutely essential that some provision of the sort should be inserted. Without some such Amendment in the Bill subscriptions were bound to fall off, and the time would come when they would absolutely disappear. What, then, would be the result? There would be a large number of these so-called Voluntary Schools in the country supported entirely by the taxpayers. That would be well enough for hon. Gentlemen opposite while a Conservative Government was in power; but when there came into office a Government which believed that the taxpayers paying the money ought to have the control, then the grant would be accompanied with local control. But that was not the object of hon. Gentlemen opposite. They were desirous that this should be an Act for the endowment of sectarian education at the expense of the public, and it was very far from their desire to see these schools under public control. Without some such provision it would not be possible to keep up subscriptions, nor would it be fair to expect it. You could not compel subscriptions. You could not decide what proportion of a man's income should be disposed of in charitable donations, and how much of this proportion for educational purposes. Suppose voluntary subscribers turned obdurate, and refused subscriptions? The First Lord of the Treasury drew a picture of two parishes side by side; in the one the necessitous school grant would be given, and in the other, where the parishioners were richer and could afford to subscribe, the money would not be given. But suppose the money was not given, what would happen to the schools? The school at once, if the money was not given and the subscriptions were withdrawn, became a necessitous school; and how did it differ from the school in the neighbouring parish? Merely in this, that while in the one case subscribers has been generous in the past, in the other men had been mean and stingy; and it was proposed, because they had been mean and stingy in the past in the one parish and generous in the other, to perpetuate the inequality. There would be School Boards forced on the parishes, which certainly was not the desire of hon. Gentlemen opposite. Last night the First Lord of the Treasury said he liked to have concrete instances, and he would give one or two from his experience. The first was the instance of a school supported by one subscriber. It was not improbable that, after the passing of this Act, this man would say that, as he was a taxpayer, called upon to contribute to this 5s. aid grant, he did not see why he should continue to subscribe to the Voluntary School; and he would be right. He could not be compelled to subscribe; and, as a result, the school would decay, and the alternative would be between giving the grant or setting up a School Board in the parish. In another instance, an excellent school was supported by a voluntary rate, and after the passing of this Act the subscribers might think it was hard that they should be taxed to keep up other schools for which no such rate was voluntarily paid, and they might refuse to continue their subscriptions. How could the grant be refused to the school which thus would be reduced to a necessitous state? While it was impossible, without this provision, to maintain the subscription list, it was proposed to penalise those who had been generous in the past for the advantage of those who had been niggardly. It had taken a long time for the State to accept its proper position in regard to Voluntary Schools, and voluntary subscribers had in the past spent large sums in building and maintaining these schools, and these were the very men now, when the State at last recognised the duty of helping these schools, whom it was proposed to penalise by adding to their subscriptions taxation for the support of other schools. The Government had directly perpetrated a grave injustice on one large body of subscribers—namely, the Board School ratepayers—under this Bill; they, under this clause, were proposing a still further injustice on subscribers to the schools to which money was proposed to be given under the Bill. It seemed as though the taxpayers were going to be plundered according to the rule of might, instead of being dealt with according to the rule of right. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said that he himself objected to the words in the clause, "due regard being had to the maintenance of voluntary subscriptions," but he did so from an altogether different point of view from that suggested by the hon. Gentlemen on the Opposition side of the House. In his opinion the words were somewhat vague. In the old days, when the duty of providing education was discharged almost exclusively by the different religious denominations, the only way of obtaining the necessary funds was by means of voluntary subscriptions. The schools so maintained were called "charity schools," and those of them that were unendowed were kept up entirely by voluntary or charitable subscriptions. But those days had passed away, and we had now recognised the necessity for compulsory education, and that it was our duty to take care that every child should be properly taught. In these altered circumstances he could not see why we should keep up the idea that charitable subscriptions should remain part and parcel of our educational system. He himself thought that the State should pay the whole cost of the secular education of the country. ["Hear, hear!" *from the Opposition Benches.*] He could only regret that this Bill did not go to that extent, leaving the cost of providing religious teaching, and of other matters not directly connected with secular teaching, to be defrayed by funds derived from voluntary subscriptions. He thought that the present system of relying upon voluntary subscriptions for meeting the cost of secular education in the denominational schools was an evil one. Where Parliament had imposed other duties, such, for instance, as vaccination, upon State Departments, it was not usual for such departments to accept the aid of voluntary subscriptions in performing them. Then why should such subscriptions be accepted in the matter of education? In the next place he wished to point out that the system of voluntary subscriptions acted very hardly upon the denominational schools in the poorer districts where there were no rich people to find the money for maintaining them in a state of efficiency. Let them take the Roman Catholic schools for instance. It was well known that they suffered great hardships in consequence of the small amount of their voluntary subscriptions; and this was also true of the Church schools in many of the poorer districts, and such schools required aid just as much as, if not more than, the Roman Catholic schools did. In his opinion, therefore, the keeping up of the system of voluntary subscriptions as a charitable element of education was altogether wrong, and was indeed injurious to the cause of education. He, however could not support the Amendment, which appeared to him to be altogether wrong in principle. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. A. J. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside) said that the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down objected to the words in the clause, "due regard being had to the maintenance of voluntary subscriptions," but for entirely different reasons from those which animated hon. Members who sat on the Opposition side of the House. He said that the State ought not to require any voluntary subscriptions whatever for the purpose of aiding education.

MR. BARTLEY: I said not for secular teaching.

Mr. MUNDELLA said that a large portion of the cost of education was defrayed by voluntary subscriptions. When the hon. Gentleman told them that charity should no longer form part and parcel of our system of secular education, was he willing to give a pledge that voluntary bodies should defray the entire cost of religious teaching?

Mr. BARTLEY: Yes.

Mr. MUNDELLA said that in that case the hon. Member was bound to vote for the Amendment before the House.

Mr. BARTLEY said that he was afraid that he must judge for himself how far he ought to go in the matter.

Mr. MUNDELLA said that the fact was that one-sixth of the cost of education was incurred for religious teaching, and the hon. Member admitted that that cost ought to be defrayed by means of voluntary subscriptions. But surely the hon. Member did not mean that the State was to pay the cost of secular education in denominational schools, without either the ratepayers or the taxpayers or the parents of the children who were compelled to attend them having a voice in the manner in which the money was to be spent, or in the management and control of the schools. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury had said that this Amendment involved one of the most important questions that could be raised upon the Bill, namely that voluntary subscriptions should be maintained in order to relieve the State grant from the demands that would otherwise be made upon it. He should like to ask the Law Officers of the Crown to give the House some explanation of what was meant by the words "Due regard being had to the maintenance of voluntary subscriptions." Was there any force in those words? The House had already voted the sum of £620,000 per annum as an additional grant to the Voluntary Schools, and that was equivalent to a capital sum of £20,000,000. The result would be that next year the Voluntary Schools would be in the receipt of grants amounting to a total sum of £4,000,000 of money, which was to be placed in the hands of the irresponsible managers of these schools for distribution among them, without any kind of representation on the management of the ratepayers, the taxpayers, or the parents. In his view this Amendment was an extremely moderate one. It was of the first importance that voluntary subscriptions should be paid, and that they should be kept up to their present amount, because without them it was impossible that the Voluntary Schools could be maintained in a state of efficiency. If the subscriptions were to fall off it would be the greatest blow that the Voluntary Schools had ever received. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, speaking on the previous night, had said that the grant would relieve the subscriptions. But in that case what would become of the subscriptions? It appeared to him that this Bill was a complete reversal of the policy of the Act of 1879. ["No!" *from the* Attorney General.] He hoped that the right hon. and learned Gentleman would get up and deny that that was the case. In 1870 it was proposed that the income of Voluntary Schools should consist of one-third subscriptions, one-third fees, and one-third grant, and finally a large concession was made to Voluntary Schools, and it was agreed that one-half should be provided by the Government grant and one-half from local sources. These words were used by Mr. Gladstone in the Debates on the Education Bill of 1870:—

> "We shall take care that under no circumstances shall public grants be allowed so to operate as entirely to supply, together with school pence, the sum necessary to support those schools, and that there shall always remain a void which must be filled up by free private contributions, and without which, failing other sources of assistance, those schools could no longer deserve the character of voluntary."

This Mr. Gladstone repeated over and over again when the Act of 1876 was under consideration, and Mr. W. E. Forster, speaking on the same Act, said:—

> "Hon. Members might say 'why should there be subscriptions'? Simply because if they kept up subscriptions additional money would be raised, and the school would be a better school than it would be without them. What the Committee had to consider was, whether they ought to intrust the management of these schools to persons who really gave nothing but their time. . . The noble Lord's (Lord Sandon) proposition really meant that any diminution of voluntary zeal should be supplied by a State grant. Now the Government of 1870 never supposed it to be the duty of Parliament to supplement by a State grant any want of voluntary zeal. . . If the result

> of the rate-supported schools were less voluntary zeal, it was no part of the State to supply the deficiency."

For the last 40 years the whole contention of the friends of Voluntary Schools had been that the only claim they had upon the management of their schools was that they supplied a large part of the funds for their maintenance. [" Hear, hear !"] He remembered the discussions that took place in 1876, and he could appeal with confidence to men who were in the House at that time. Every Liberal Unionist now in the House, who was in the House at that time, opposed that Bill at every stage, because it increased the grant above the one-half agreed to in 1870. Not only that, there were at least half a dozen Members of the Government who were foremost in their opposition to the Act of 1870, and the present First Lord of the Admiralty went so far as to raise a Debate on the Third Reading and declared his intention to divide the House, which he did, as a protest against any more grants being given to schools not under public control. [*Cheers.*] Yet out of all these gentlemen there was only one, or perhaps two, who had been faithful to those pledges. He would like to know how it was that when the Government were anxious to render great service to Voluntary Schools they quoted the views of the clergy, but when they were asked to do anything of this sort, they passed them by. No man had been more consistent on this question than the present Archbishop of Canterbury. [" Hear, hear ! "] The Archbishop expressed himself thus on this very point so recently as June 9 of last year :—

> " Churchmen often urge that they have to pay school rates like others and school subscriptions besides, and ask why they should bear this extra burden. And the answer is that it is the price of keeping the invaluable privilege of appointing the teachers without any interference. In no other way could they have kept this privilege, and in no other way can they permanently keep it."

[*Cheers.*] In these circumstances he asked why it was that the Government refused to consider this Amendment in any shape or form. There was no other way of maintaining voluntary subscriptions except by fixing some statutory limit. Unless that was done they might be quite sure that these grants instead of going to increase the efficiency of the schools would go to relieve voluntary subscriptions, and the last state of these schools would be worse than the first. [" Hear, hear !"] Voluntary subscriptions had been steadily diminishing from year to year since 1876, and they had been, what was worse, much more fictitious than they were. [" Hear, hear !"] In the present state of the education of the country, of which the Committee had heard very little during these Debates, nothing could be more important than an increase of staff and the improvement of schools. A Return had been published within the last few days, and it showed that in more than half the unions of this country the fourth standard was the standard of total exemption, and that in many municipal boroughs the same low standard prevailed.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS reminded the right hon. Gentleman that his remarks were hardly relevant to the Amendment.

MR. MUNDELLA said he was only referring to it in order to show how necessary it was that the subscriptions should be kept up, because if these schools were not efficient and such a low standard continued, they would be giving four millions of money to the continuance of a state of things which was distressful to the country. [" Hear, hear !"]

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir ROBERT FINLAY, Inverness Burghs) said the right hon. Gentleman seemed to suppose that this Bill involved a reversal of policy of the Act of 1870 ; but he would point out that it provided that the grant should be distributed with a due regard to the maintenance of voluntary subscriptions. He could assure the right hon. Gentleman that there was no intention to reverse the policy of the Act of 1870, and that the Government were as anxious as the right hon. Gentleman himself could be that the subscriptions should be adequately maintained. In the view of the Government it was essential that the subscriptions should be kept up, and, if possible, in some cases increased. But it was not desirable to lay down on the subject a cast-iron rule such as the Amendment proposed. The more elastic machinery of the Bill was preferable. The statement that subscriptions to Voluntary Schools were often unreal, supplied an argument against this proposal to adopt as a standard the average of subscriptions for such a period as three years. It was well known that the subscriptions fluctuated very much. A great effort was made in one year and with the amount then raised schools were carried on successfully for the next two or three years, during which the subscriptions were much less. Therefore if the average of the last three years was adopted as the standard, that standard would be sometimes unduly high and sometimes unduly low. [Mr. MUNDELLA: "Take an average of five years then."] Any attempt to set up a cast-iron rule like that proposed must break down. Moreover, such a rule would not meet all the necessities of the case. For example, in a district which was increasing largely in numbers and wealth, it would be perfectly fair to expect that the school subscriptions would increase also, and the Department would be entitled to take that into account.

SIR FRANK LOCKWOOD (York) had hoped that the hon. and learned Member would make some attempt to define the meaning of the words "due regard being had to the maintenance of voluntary subscriptions." But the hon. and learned Member had contented himself with reading out the words. The Committee, however, did not want lessons in reading or pronunciation. [*Laughter.*] What they did want to hear was the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown as to the way in which the Law Courts would interpret these words. The oracles, however, were dumb. [*Laughter.*] His own view was that the words were absolutely useless, and that if they should ever be quoted in a Court of Law the judges would once more be heard saying that they never elsewhere read such nonsense as they found in Acts of Parliament. What the Opposition were contending for was the maintenance of subscriptions at their present level. That was said by the Government to be the principle of the Bill, but there was nothing in the Measure to insure that that principle would be adhered to. This Amendment, like all its predecessors, had been met by a blank negative. ["Hear, hear!"] He remembered the sufferings of the present Attorney General when a Bill for the reform of Irish municipal government passed through the Grand Committee on Law without amendment. He should never forget his hon. and learned Friend's horror—[*laughter*]—at this result of what he considered to be a terrible and reckless use of a majority. But the case now before them was a much worse one. He supposed that these Amendments were rejected so that the Government might escape a stage of discussion at a later date. That was not the proper spirit in which to approach Amendments. If the Government objected specially to adopt an average of three years, why should they not suggest some other term?

SIR W. HART DYKE (Kent, Dartford) said it was true that on the Second Reading he had argued that it would be well to proceed by adopting the method of average. But he had since reconsidered the point, and had come to the conclusion that there would be great difficulties in carrying out any such plan as the Amendment proposed. He was not ashamed to say that he had changed his opinion upon the point. [*Laughter and cheers.*] When they remembered the uncertain and variable financial position of Voluntary Schools, they would see that grievous hardship must be inflicted in some cases if the hard-and-fast proposal of the hon. Member opposite were established as law. In the case of a sudden withdrawal of his contributions by a large landowner, it would surely be very hard if, before the managers had had time to recover their position, the Department should swoop down upon them and say, "Because you have lost this considerable sum of money you are to be mulcted of the grant." The words in the Bill he interpreted to mean that in no possible case ought the Department to hand over the grant without making due inquiry and having due regard to the state of the subscription list, not on a particular day, nor for a particular year, but during the time that the school had existed. That was no hard task for the Department. They had a return which showed each year, and month by month, what the subscriptions were; and, having that knowledge, the Department could, if it chose, apply the screw on the managers. It might be said that this principle would operate differently under different Governments, that the same pressure would not be put on schools when a Unionist Government was in power as would be the case when their opponents were in power.

But he thought it would work evenly as it affected the Department, because it should be remembered that the Department would be dealing with a single lump sum yearly. The effect of pressure on the Department by necessitous schools would be to lead them on all occasions to make the most of this sum, and to induce them to bring pressure to bear in the case of any school where the subscriptions were not adequate. It was constantly being urged that subscriptions were dwindling year by year, and that the actual subscriptions paid per child were not the same to-day as in 1870. But hon. Members should take the gross amount paid. The gross sum paid by subscribers to Voluntary Schools in 1875 was £673,000; in 1895 it was £834,000. [*Cheers.*] If the Amendment was carried it would in many instances inflict grievous injury on Voluntary Schools.

MR. ELLIS GRIFFITH (Anglesey) said that many hon. Members would be disposed to think that the first opinion of the right hon. Gentleman was more satisfactory than his present opinion. Whoever heard that the words of any particular statute should be put under the guidance of any particular Department? [The ATTORNEY GENERAL: "Constantly."] The right hon. Gentleman said that the words "due regard" meant "due regard after due inquiry." That, at any rate, was some news. But they asked the question of the Government, "What do you mean by due regard?" Supposing the subscriptions had gone up or down; if they had gone up the schools would not need so much money, and if they had gone down they did not deserve as much. The Solicitor General's version of the words was that in certain circumstances they would insist on the subscriptions being raised. If that was the case, then was "maintenance" the right word, where it meant, not maintenance, but the raising of voluntary subscriptions? How could they maintain voluntary subscriptions in schools where there were no subscriptions at all? There were over 1,000 of these schools; what, then, was the construction placed by the Government on those words with reference to those schools, or with reference to schools not yet in existence, but which they were going to assist? They knew what voluntary subscriptions meant. They were the price paid by certain monopolists for teaching their religious creed under the pretence of teaching education. There were 3,797 schools in which the average subscription was under 5s. Some words ought to be introduced providing that where the subscriptions up to now amount to less than 5s., three years should be given to those schools to raise them up to 5s. per head. That was a fair and equitable scheme. There were two classes of subscribers whom the Bill would relieve—the poor clergymen and the Roman Catholics. It would inflict a great hardship on the taxpayers to make them pay taxes in order to relieve either necessitous clergymen or Roman Catholics, or any other necessitous class of people, while Voluntary Schools were under private control and management.

LORD HUGH CECIL (Greenwich) intervened in the Debate because he did not think the particular point of view from which he regarded the Amendment had been set before the Committee in any of the speeches. He agreed with many of the remarks of the hon. Member for Islington, but the case he stated ought, he thought, to be stated very much more strongly. The hon. Member said he wished to see the charity element removed from education. He should say he wished to see blackmailing removed from education—the element of using the religious convictions of part of the community as a means of extorting money. What, after all, was the voluntary system? He thought if they were not accustomed to it and did not know all its incidents so well, they should be more shocked at it than they were. The State said to a certain number of its members that they were persons belonging to a religious faith, that they attached the greatest possible importance to those beliefs, that they were anxious to extend their benefits to other people and to children who, through no fault of their own, might and would be deprived of a religious education such as their parents would desire. "Well," said the State,

> "since you are more religious and more unselfish than your neighbours you must pay for your eccentricity. You must pay because you cannot bear that the children of poor people are to be deprived of all you consider most valuable, and, if you do not pay, contemplate with all the tranquillity your conscience will enable you the religious belief of these children left to the chance mercy of a School Board or

the accidental beliefs of a particular teacher, and pay more liberally in aid of our educational system."

That appeared to be a true statement of the effect of the attitude of the State towards voluntary subscribers, and when they had regard to the poverty of many of the subscribers and the immense wealth of the State, it was not merely unjust in itself, but also in the highest degree shameful to the country which carried it out. ["Hear, hear!"] It might be said that if he thought the subscriptions were so unjust he ought to vote against the words relating to them remaining in the Bill, but he proposed not to do so for a very obvious and simple reason. The aid grant in the Bill was so inadequate to the needs of the Voluntary Schools that, even with the whole aid that subscribers now gave, and would, he hoped, continue to give in future, the schools would not be in a perfectly satisfactory position or in one of security. It followed, therefore, that if he voted for the excision of these words as to subscriptions from the Bill he should be aiding in destroying some of the resources on which Voluntary Schools must rely. It had always been the point of view of Churchmen that, great as were the grievances of voluntary subscribers, those grievances were a secondary matter compared with the welfare of the schools. Religious education was indeed being held to the ransom of the State. But it had always been accounted a work of piety to contribute to the ransom of a captive. It was far better that subscribers should go on for a little time longer suffering the injustices they endured than that the schools and the religious education dependent upon them should run any danger whatever, and therefore he proposed to vote against the Amendment. ["Hear, hear!"] He did not share the opinion that the provision in the Bill could be used for the benefit of voluntary subscribers or that it ought to be so used. He did not think it ought to be so used, because that would endanger the interests of the schools, and he did not think it could be so used, because the existing pressure was so great that, with all the help the schools would get they would have more than enough to do. ["Hear, hear!"] The pressure which had already put them in great danger would continue to force them to collect all the money they were able out of voluntary subscriptions. The First Lord of the Treasury thought Voluntary Schools would cease to exist if voluntary subscriptions ceased. That did not appear to him easily reconciled with what the right hon. Gentleman said in the earlier stages of the Bill—namely, that the denominational principle was so strong that the country would never acquiesce in its extinction.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I never said denominational schools would cease to exixst; I said Voluntary Schools.

LORD HUGH CECIL agreed it was true Voluntary Schools would cease to exist if voluntary support were withdrawn, though that was not a matter which any Churchman would regard with any regret whatever. They had more than enough to do with their money without subsidising the State to pay its educational expenditure. ["Hear, hear!"] He should rejoice if the voluntary system came to an end at once, so long as the denominational system was preserved. [*Opposition cheers.*] He was confident they were not very far off that result, and he acquiesced, therefore, all the more cheerfully in the decision the Committee was bound to come to. ["Hear, hear!"]

*MR. JOHN BRIGG (York, W.R., Keighley) supported the Amendment, which he said was very much on the same lines as one he had on the Paper, except that he proposed five years as the period to be taken instead of three. He contended that the definition of the words "due regard" was one which was open to a very large amount of doubt, and he asked the Solicitor General to give them a definition in some legal terms which could be understood. There was apparently no intention on the part of the Government to abolish voluntary subscriptions, and why then should there be any objection to some kind of definition as to the form in which they should continue, so as to insure that voluntary subscriptions should go on? It was quite clear that the feeling in the country was one of alarm as to what would be the consequences if this Act came into operation at once. There would be difficulty when it was found that the amounts to which they were entitled would vary as between different schools, there being no power to control the associations which would have to recommend what the amount should be. Schools having high subscriptions at the present time would compare themselves with other schools in the same neighbourhood having very low subscriptions. The former school would know that the reason they had high subscriptions was because they took an interest in the school, which was well managed, under good control, and, therefore, obtained grants and subscriptions in aid for successful work. But they would now learn that if they allowed the school would know that the reason they had high subscriptions was because they took an interest in the them to obtain contributions from the new grant to Voluntary Schools. If the Education Department was in consequence to give more where the subscriptions fell off and less where the subscriptions rose, it was necessary it should have an average on which to base its opinion. He hoped the First Lord of the Treasury would consider the suggestions now made for the disposal of the money to be granted under the Bill. To snatch divisions and apply the Closure might assist the supporters of the Bill in a Parliamentary sense, but it was not good government for the country.

*Mr. EMERSON BAINBRIDGE (Lincoln, Gainsborough) stated that he was wishful to bring before the notice of the Leader of the House an illustration which had a very important bearing upon this important Amendment. Nearly every hon. Member in the House who was connected with industrial undertakings was in the position, like himself, of being a considerable subscriber to Voluntary Schools. In his own case he was a supporter of nine Voluntary Schools, and when the time arrived for the appropriation of the money in this Bill, he would be a claimant for the aid grant of 5s. per child, or (in view of the rejection of the Amendment for the exclusion of the word "necessitous") 10s. per child, which was the probable amount per child provided by this Bill. ["Hear, hear!"] When he had received this amount of aid—and not till then—he would, like many other subscribers, responding to the ordinary instincts of human nature, be much disposed not to witdraw, but to reduce his voluntary subscription, say, 10 or 25 per cent. It was because this Amendment would have the effect of preventing him and others from having the power to reduce such voluntary subscription, excepting at the risk of losing the aid grant, that he would support the Amendment. The clause, as it stood, was vague and ineffective, and he hoped the Government would see their way to make it clear and definite. ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. A. H. DYKE ACLAND (York, W.R., Rotherham) reminded the Committee that the average grant to Voluntary Schools was being increased, and the First Lord of the Treasury was in favour of voluntary subscriptions being kept up. Should there not be, as there formerly was, a *quid pro quo* for the increased grant from the Imperial Exchequer? The noble Lord the Member for Greenwich looked upon the keeping up of voluntary subscriptions as doubtful with reference to its ultimate advantage to denominational schools. He treated voluntary subscriptions not as a charity element in the support of schools, but as a blackmail element, and he considered those who were making voluntary contributions were treated in a way that was in the highest degree harmful to the country. That was not the view of the bulk of the leaders of the Anglican Church. The Bishop of Salisbury held a totally different view. If five hours' religious instruction were given per week during a master's attendance of 30 hours, the Bishop suggested the extra cost of religious teaching should be regarded as equivalent to one-sixth of the master's salary, and that this extra cost should be borne by the Voluntary Schools. He himself asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether there was not some method by which what all appeared to desire could be carried out without grave injustice? It might be provided that, in all schools where the subscription was at present above 5s. per head, that at least should be maintained, and in all schools where that sum had not been reached the aid grant should be decreased. Everybody seemed to desire that a certain amount of voluntary subscription, apart from money put into buildings and the like, should be a condition of the receipt of the aid grant. There were a good many schools where the subscriptions hardly averaged 1s. per child, including all the various sources of contribution. If the Education Department, in a case of that kind, provided that within a reasonable time the subscriptions should come up to 5s., as a condition of receiving the aid grant, he thought it would only be reasonable. He asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether by some moderate Amendment more might not be done than the vague words in the Bill would accomplish to realise the desire so many had in view.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said he had given a great deal of thought to the question, and he held distinctly that there were cases in which it would, from one reason or another, be impossible to expect an increase or perpetual maintenance of existing subscriptions. In view of this, he did not think the introduction of rigid words would meet the necessities of the case. He thought the words he had chosen were, on the whole, the best suited to meet those necessities, and he hoped the Committee would adhere to them.

*MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Notts, Mansfield) said the speech of the noble Lord the Member for Greenwich showed there was a distinct line of cleavage on this subject among the supporters of the Government. Both the noble Lord and the hon. Member for Islington had frankly expressed the opinion that the State should exact nothing from subscribers for the maintenance of Voluntary Schools. He was glad they had been so candid, because their speeches furnished them on the Opposition side of the House with additional reasons why the Amendment should be pressed. On the other hand, the First Lord of the Treasury on Monday, and the Solicitor General to-day, had distinctly declared that they thought it essential that voluntary subscriptions should be maintained, and even increased. If the Government held that view, let this Bill be so framed that the Education Department would be strengthened in the efforts they would have to make to give effect to that principle. Besides the 1,061 schools where there were no subscriptions whatever, there were 674 schools where the average rate of subscription was only 1s. per child per annum. There would be two cardinal difficulties when this Bill became law—the question of the necessitous schools, and that of the amount of their subscriptions. The head of the Education Department would have to face the entire Roman Catholic Church, and those who were represented by the hon. Members for Islington and Greenwich, and probably a larger number of individuals who would be ready to find every excuse for, at any rate, reducing the amount of their subscriptions. He wished to strengthen the hands of the Education Department. They were told that it was absolutely impossible for Parliament to settle these questions; how, then, could the Department settle them? He was in favour of the maintenance of voluntary subscriptions, because they represented interest and influence. If the result of their legislation was that voluntary subscriptions ceased, the result would be that they would have the one-man system of management in an intensified form. In the interests of education and of justice, the principle of this Amendment ought, in some form or other, to be embodied in the Bill.

Several hon. Members rose to continue the discussion, when

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY claimed to move "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 283; Noes, 131.—(Division List, No. 85.)

Question put accordingly, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 285; Noes, 130.—(Division List, No. 86.)

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) moved in Sub-section (2) after the word "subscriptions" to insert the words "paid *bonâ fide* by private individuals." He said that the Amendment raised a new point—what were the subscriptions to which due regard was to be paid? There was a pious hope in the Committee that the "private" subscriptions would be continued, but whenever voluntary subscriptions had been spoken of, the term was found to include other things besides private subscriptions—some that the Committee would desire to include, and some that it would not desire to include in the contributions to which "due regard" was to be had. There was no desire to cut off these other sources of income, but they should not be included in this connection. Endowments, the gifts of public departments and the receipts for letting school rooms ought not rank with private subscriptions, or with a voluntary rate. The Amendment which he moved had been suggested by the managers of the best Voluntary Schools in his own constituency. They desired that in those schools where no subscriptions were collected, a serious effort should be made in the future. He had the accounts of various schools which he could show to hon. Members. In one case the amount received by the school from various departments of the Government, including the Parliamentary grants, the Science and Art Department's grant, and a gift from the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, amounted to £286 a year, and the income from all other sources varied from £13 to £14 1s. a year. Yet that school was able to pay £45 to a capital account in a single year. In another school the Government Departments found over £422 a year, and all other sources of income amounted to £15 odd a year. There were no subscriptions and no voluntary rate. In another case, the Departments contributed £418 a year, £10 was received from charity, and all other sources of income produced £4 in one year, and in another year nothing at all. If unguarded words about "due regard being had to the maintenance of voluntary subscriptions" were put into the Bill, all these extraneous forms of income might be included. He knew a case where the managers of a Voluntary School had informed the friends that in future they hoped not to have to make any further application. He begged to move.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said he hoped the Amendment would not be pressed. Whether a distinction ought to be drawn between private subscriptions and subscriptions from public bodies or not, it was certainly desirable that both classes of subscriptions should be maintained; and he did not see why a distinction should be drawn. The right hon. Gentleman had mentioned the case of a school which received a contribution from the Commissioners of Woods and Forests. Probably that was because the Commissioners were the principal owners in the district, and he should not like to see any words in an Act of Parliament which prevented such contributions. But the right hon. Gentleman's words would go much further, and prevent railway companies and colleges from subscribing to Voluntary Schools, to which a serious injury might thus be done.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said that the difficulty again was one of definition. What did the term "subscription" cover? Would it cover endowments? The public subscriptions to which the right hon. Gentleman referred would not be affected by the Amendment.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL said that he did not think the word "subscription" could include endowments.

MR. REGINALD McKENNA (Monmouth, N.) pointed out that the Amendment could not possibly prevent any public body from subscribing. It was only a question of whether regard was to be had to such subscriptions in calculating the grant. When the Education Department were having "due regard" to the maintenance of voluntary subscriptions, what were they to have in their mind as the meaning of "voluntary subscriptions?" No provision was made as to the exercise of that "due regard." All that this Amendment asked was that at any rate they should know what they meant by the use of the terms they had already sanctioned. They were not yet quite clear what "voluntary subscriptions" did mean. For some purposes endowments were now held to be voluntary subscriptions, and he imagined that under this Measure endowments would still be held to be voluntary subscriptions. That was to say, the Education Department would, in looking at the condition of a school, only inquire if it had got sources of revenue outside the Parliamentary funds, and if it had got sources of revenue outside Parliamentary funds in the shape of endowments, the Education Department would not feel incline to allow this Parliamentary grant. That would be a nationalisation of parochial charities, which he thought they were entitled to object to. Unless they had a clear definition of what was the meaning of "voluntary subscriptions" they would never know what it was they were voting for or what it was they were asking the

Education Department to undertake. The Amendment thoroughly satisfied that reasonable definition and he should support it.

Sir JOHN LUBBOCK (London University) said that far from simplifying the Bill, this Amendment would introduce another element of doubt and difficulty, because they would have to say what was a "private individual" in this Bill. Why should schools which received subscriptions from colleges or a public body be placed in a different class to schools which received subscriptions from private individuals?

Mr. HUMPHREYS-OWEN (Montgomery) was understood to support the Amendment.

Mr. T. LOUGH (Islington, W.) said he could not support the Amendment in its present form. It would not only shut out the subscriptions of public bodies, but what was a private individual? Should they not take a subscription from a public individual, if there was a public individual. Some definition was required. At the end of the Bill they had a definition of a Voluntary School, but there was no definition of what was a voluntary subscription. He thought the right hon. Gentleman opposite might put a stop to the discussion on the Amendment if he would promise that at the end of the Bill there should be inserted a definition of what a voluntary subscription was. This seemed to him all the more necessary because the associations might make grants in particular cases, and this might make the matter even more complicated than it was at present.

*Mr. F. A. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) said he could not support the Amendment. He was no friend to Voluntary Schools, but it seemed to him that, if they had Voluntary Schools at all, they should recognise the help given by various societies and public bodies to those schools just as much as they recognised the help given by individuals.

Mr. SAMUEL EVANS (Glamorgan, Mid) said there was considerable difficulty about the wording of this Amendment. The First Lord of the Treasury asked whether amounts which were sources of income to these Voluntary Schools, and which could not in any degree or sense be classed as voluntary subscriptions, were to be taken into account by the Government in making this grant. So far as he could see, in the tables of the Department, everything was allowed to be classed under the head of voluntary subscriptions except the Government grant. What his right hon. Friend complained of was that the figures which were here set down in these tables as "endowments" and "miscellaneous receipts," should be regarded by the Education Department as voluntary subscriptions, and would be included in this term "voluntary subscriptions" which had to be had regard to acording to the Bill. He confessed he did not like the wording of the Amendment.

*Sir C. DILKE said the Amendment did not stand in the form of which he gave notice, and he was quite conscious that it was very difficult to frame an Amendment to carry out the intention which he desired to carry out. He thought perhaps it would be better to introduce it by way of a provision at the end of Sub-section 6, and he would ask leave to withdraw the Amendment on the present occasion.

Amendment negatived.

Sir ALBERT ROLLIT (Islington, S.) moved, in Sub-section (2), after the word "subscriptions" to insert the words, "as a reason for granting such aid." He said that, while many of them were not disposed to go the full length of the suggestion that securities ought to be taken for the maintenance of these voluntary subscriptions, they thought there should at any rate be some general indication in the Bill that the maintenance of subscriptions was to be regarded as the intention of the Bill. There was no such distinct indication in the Measure at present. The words "due regard being had to the maintenance of voluntary subscriptions" might be held either to favour the maintenance of those subscriptions, or they might be justifiably construed by the Education Department as indicating that due regard should be had to the maintenance of those subscriptions as a reason for giving help to the necessitous schools. In other words, if the subscriptions were large, there was no need for the aid grant; if, on the other hand, the voluntary subscriptions failed, then the grant was more greatly needed than before. He thought the latter would be a more reasonable construction, and probably the one which any Department might be advised to take. The phrase in the section was ambiguous. He did not think the duty of Parliament was fulfilled if it allowed a vague clause to be arbitrarily construed by a Department without some clear indication of what the intention of Parliament was. If one effect of the Bill should be to materially decrease the subscriptions, he did not hesitate to say that the Bill would ultimately lead to the deterioration and absorption of the Voluntary Schools.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: I do not quite follow how the hon. Member makes his line of remark relevant to the present Amendment. He seems to be discussing the last Amendment. I should like the hon. Member to explain what the meaning of his Amendment is.

SIR ALBERT ROLLIT said the words of the clause, as they stood, might be construed by the Department in either of two ways; "due regard" might be if the subscriptions were increased, or if they fell off. The clause should give a clear, not a vague, indication of the will of Parliament.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: If that is so, the hon. Member is seeking to upset the decision to which the Committee has just come.

SIR ALBERT ROLLIT submitted that, unless some stimulus was contained in the Bill that Parliament intended that one condition should be the maintenance of the subscriptions, then the permanence of the Voluntary Schools, instead of being promoted, would be endangered.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL said that, although a school was necessitous, it might be a reason for withholding the grant if the subscriptions were improperly withheld, and that was perfectly well indicated by the words "due regard." The hon. Member's Amendment instead of making the clause clearer made it less clear. The maintenance of voluntary subscriptions was not a reason for giving the aid grant; it was the fact of the school being a necessitous school.

SIR ALBERT ROLLIT asked leave to withdraw his Amendment.

Leave being refused on the Opposition side of the House,

The Committee divided on the Question, "That those words be there inserted." Ayes, 84; Noes, 205.—(Division List, No. 87.)

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: The second Amendment, standing in the name of the hon. Member for Anglesey (Mr. Griffith), towards the top of page 19 of the Amendment Paper, is in order, but it ought to come at the end of the clause.

MR. J. A. PEASE (Northumberland, Tyneside) pointed out that he had an Amendment on page 18.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: That is the same as the Amendment of the hon. Member for North Monmouthshire, which has been disposed of.

MR. J. A. PEASE submitted most respectfully that there had been no discussion as to the definition of "necessitous."

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: If the Amendment is intended to be a definition of the word "necessitous" it clearly ought to come in the definition clause. The first and third Amendments of the hon. Member for Anglesey, standing on the top of page 20, are in order, but ought to come at the end of the clause.

MR. ACLAND: May I ask you, Sir, where the second Amendment of the hon. Member for Anglesey is out of order?

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: I think it is beyond the scope of the Bill altogether. The Amendment of the hon. Member for East Northamptonshire (Mr. Channing) is in order, but it ought to come up as a new clause. The next Amendment in order is at the top of page 22, Mr. Lloyd-George.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON asked whether the Chairman would give the reason which induced him to rule out of order the Amendment in the name of the hon. Member for West Carmarthen (Mr. Lloyd Morgan), which provided that no school should receive the aid grant where the education was not free.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: The hon. Member will remember that the subject was discussed on Clause 1, page 1, line 5, where an hon. Member for one of the divisions of Lincolnshire moved to insert the words, "in which no charge for school fees is made." He will remember that I several times pointed out it was not the proper place to discuss the Amendment, or, indeed, to move it. What the hon. Member intended was to move it on the Second sub-section, but as he moved it on the first sub-section and took a division the Committee are precluded from re-opening the question. ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. ACLAND respectfully pointed out that when he was speaking on the question of fee-paying schools, and how far they were really free or not, the Chairman called him to order, and he desisted at once, because he understood they would be allowed to have an opportunity of discussing whether the new grant ought to be distributed to a school which was a free school or not.

*The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS: That was not my fault, but the fault of the hon. Member, who chose to move his Amendment in the wrong place.

*Mr. F. A. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) said that the purpose of the Amendment which stood in his name was, in respect to associations, to suggest the procedure which was adopted in the case of the Act of 1870. He submitted that if he could not move the Amendment until the third sub-section was dealt with he would be precluded from suggesting an alternative scheme.

*The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS: If the hon. Member's Amendment is intended to provide an alternative to the scheme of the Government, it is quite clear the Government are entitled to have their scheme placed before the Committee first.

Mr. SAMUEL EVANS: There are several Amendments down in my name before we come to—

*The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS: Order, order! It is extremely unusual to cross-examine the Chairman in the way that is now being done. [*Ministerial cheers.*] I think it will not be my duty to reply any further. I may say, however, that I have taken a great deal of trouble—["hear, hear!"]—to understand the Amendments, and I do not think it would conduce to the order of business if I were cross-examined as to my reasons. [*Cheers.*]

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon Boroughs) moved to leave out Sub-section (3). He said his Amendment challenged directly the principle of the proposal of the Government as to associations and the machinery connected with them. This was the first time a proposal of this kind had been incorporated in a Government Bill and made compulsory, and the issue raised by the Amendment was not whether they would permit Voluntary Schools to form associations for the purpose of increasing their educational efficiency, but whether they were going to bring pressure to bear on the schools to combine or associate. He maintained that the proposition of the Government was unfair to Voluntary Schools themselves. It was unfair to the better-class Voluntary Schools, to the schools the subscribers to which were doing their duty, because a certain amount of partiality and favouritism was shown to the schools the subscribers to which grossly neglected their duty. Let them take the cases of Liverpool, Manchester, and Preston. In Liverpool there were 48 Church schools, but only 12 of them received the average amount of subscriptions paid throughout the country. This was how the matter stood. According to the scheme of the Bill the poor schools which required support would not get it, and the schools which were well off would get support. It was true that the Government might say that was a matter for the Education Department, but after all, no Government Department could exercise the control that was necessary in this case. And here he came to the point of the Roman Catholic Schools. In Liverpool they represented a much poorer class of the population than in Manchester, and the Roman Catholics subscribed far more liberally to their schools than Churchmen. They were in fact going to penalise those who were doing their work well for the benefit of those who neglected to do their work well. The fact was that Lord Penrhyn was making £1,800 per annum out of his unselfishness, and that was the case of many other rich landowners. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, in referring to this subject, the other day, said that the question was whether they were going to punish those landowners who had done their duty for the benefit of those landowners who had not done their duty. He could not see how these associations were going to work as between one parish and another, in the cases of necessitous schools. If the income of a school was inadequate to its expenditure was it a necessitous school? For instance, in one parish they might have schools where the subscriptions amounted to 30s. per child, whilst in the next parish there might be a school where the subscriptions only amounted to 2s. per child. Were they going to give 10s. per head of this grant to the poorer school and nothing to the richer school. In such a case the House might depend upon it that the subscriptions would fall off, which would work badly for the Voluntary Schools as a whole, and consequently for the interests of the children who were being educated in them. He should like to know upon what principle the representation of the schools upon the associations was to be based—was it to be based upon the number of children in each school or upon the population of the district. He thought that the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury should take the House into his confidence upon this subject. In his view, the money ought to be distributed in accordance with the discretion of the Education Department, and, therefore, it was that he begged to move the Amendment that stood upon the Paper in his name.

On the return of the CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS, after the usual interval,

MR. McKENNA said that he had not any such rooted objection to the principle of associations as was entertained by certain members of the clerical party whose speeches he had read. He did not see why there should be greater objection to the existence of an irresponsible and non-representative association than there was to irresponsible and non-representative managers. As a matter of fact the associations were to be more responsible than the school managers from whose ranks they were to be formed. Of the principle of association, therefore, he did not complain. Indeed, were the Bill exactly in the form in which the Solicitor General described it as being in his speech on the Second Reading, he would not be able to oppose the formation of associations. The hon. and learned Gentleman said,

> "All the Bill had to do was to encourage the formation of associations by saying that the schools forming them should have two privileges."

If that really were the limit he would not object. But there was a very serious objection—namely, the financial objection hinted at by the hon. Member for East Mayo in the course of the speech of the Vice President of the Council on the Second Reading. The hon. Member for East Mayo asked,

> "Is there no power in the Bill to discriminate between associations in proportion to the necessities of the schools forming them?"

and the right hon. Gentleman replied,

> "No, there is not, and therefore the larger the association the more likely you are to get the average level. I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman can suggest any improvement by which such a power of discrimination could be exercised, but I do not see any possibility of it."

The framers of the Bill proposed to penalise schools that refrained from joining associations, and the Department had to administer the funds as they thought best for the purpose of helping necessitous schools. With those words before them it was essential that the Education Department should lay down for itself some outline as to what they meant by the word "necessitous." On a communication of that outline to the various associations they could inform the Department of the number of schools they had in their body and which could reasonably be described as necessitous. The Education Department would know at once the amount of money to be allotted to a particular association, and if the allotment was not made by the association on the number of necessitous schools in the association a serious danger might result. When the association was formed there would be a strong inducement to the managers of that association to invite rich schools which otherwise would not receive a grant direct from the Department to join the association merely for the purpose of becoming 5s. grant earners. The inducement to the managers to offer a bribe of some portion of the 5s. to a rich school in order to induce it to join the association would be overwhelming. The Vice President had alluded to the fact that the associations must be limited in their area in order to give personal knowledge of management to the schools under their control. Taking the Diocesan area they found that the wealth or the poverty of the Voluntary Schools varied very considerably in the different areas. In the southern areas they would have in the associations a number of more or less well-to-do schools; in the north they would have almost exclusively poor schools; yet, under the association system, the schools of the north and south would earn the same amount, with the result that they would be putting unnecessary money into the southern lap, while the north would have to be satisfied with its dole of 5s. per head. Again, the Roman Catholic schools were almost entirely in School Board areas, and in their case it was a question of *bonâ fide* conscience in every instance, while the same could not be said for the Church of England. [*Cries of* "Why not?"] The Roman Catholic would not send his child to a Board School at all; the Roman Catholics had made sacrifices out of all proportion to the sacrifices made by the Church of England. But the Church of England parent did not make it a matter of conscience whether or not he should send his child to a Board School or to a Voluntary School. Besides, the Roman Catholic schools were all poor schools without exception, and any association which was created of Roman Catholic schools would in all probability be composed of one body. In that case they would have all these poor Roman Catholic schools in an association, without any rich schools among them, and whose only function would be that of earning a subscription for the association. The result would be that the Roman Catholic schools would never earn anything more than the 5s. He, therefore, supported the Amendment for three reasons. First of all, the Government offered a bribe to association managers to waste their money on the rich schools in order to induce them to come into the associations; second, there was no distinction made between the well-to-do and comparatively poor associations in the amount of money they were to receive; third, in the case of Roman Catholic schools, upon which so much argument had been based, they could not receive anything but the most moderate allowance from the system of associations.

MR. HENRY HOBHOUSE (Somerset, E.) said that, though great differences of opinion had been developed in the course of the Debate, he thought there would be general agreement on this point—that the task which had been imposed on the Education Department by the provisions of the Bill was a most difficult and burdensome one. On that side of the House they would be glad to welcome any device or machinery by which that hard-working Department could be aided in performing properly this extremely difficult task. They had constituted the Education Department the final arbiter in the distribution of the aid grant. Surely they all saw the necessity of constituting between the Education Department on the one hand and the £14 or £15 schools among which this aid grant had been distributed, some link of a local character which might fulfil the homely duties of a buffer. He did not think they ought to throw the whole responsibility of discriminating between the needs of this large number of schools either on the Department itself or its inspectors. Personally, he confessed a preference for a proposal such as that which was included in the Bill of last year for a local authority between the Education Department and the schools. ["Hear, hear!"] Hon. Gentlemen might cheer that observation now, but it was due to their vehement opposition to the principle of the Bill of last year that there was no longer the option of having a local authority. ["Hear, hear!"] In the absence of a local authority representing the taxpayers he welcomed a body like an association which would represent the various Voluntary Schools proposed to be aided. There was nothing new in the idea of association. In his own diocese there had been constituted a very useful and successful association of Church day schools on the basis of rural deaneries, managers of schools in each rural deanery appointing a certain body of representatives, who met frequently to help each other's schools, who discussed each other's needs, and from their number they selected an executive committee for the whole diocese. It had proved an extremely good plan in the interest of Voluntary Schools. Whether the area of association under the Bill be that of the diocese or smaller, such as the archdeaconry—he was considering the matter from the Church schools' point of view—he thought mattered comparatively little. It was left elastic under the scheme, and so long as it was of sufficien size to include a considerable number of schools to allow of proper distribution among schools of varying degrees of necessity, it mattered little if a million, a half-million, or a quarter of a million of people were included in it. These associations had been spoken of as compulsory associations, and for this reason the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Rotherham had tried to draw a strong distinction between associations under the Bill and existing associations of Church schools. But though called compulsory, they were so in a very modified sense. No associations need be formed under the Bill, and no association would be formed if the prevailing opinion of the bodies having interest in Voluntary Schools was against it. All the Bill said was, that if associations were formed, if a majority of Voluntary Schools formed an association, then power would be given to the Education Department to require the minority of the schools to enter into associations belonging to their own denominations. It was very desirable that some such power should exist if associations were to be satisfactory in their working, otherwise a minority of rich schools might stand out, in the certainty or good hope of receiving the whole of the 5s., while the poor schools were collected into association. Only to that extent was association compulsory. If the proposal were to force schools of all denominations into association against the will of the managers, or the great body of managers and subscribers, that would be a proposal not acceptable to the representatives of Voluntary Schools as a whole, but that was not the proposal in the Bill; and when the Committee came to discuss the compulsory power it would be found to be of a very different character. He could see no reason why association should not work perfectly well for the object of the Bill. What would be done actually would be, that schools in the association would be called upon to submit to the governing body their balance sheets, including their expenditure, the salaries paid to teachers, and, on the other hand, a statement of resources; and, if they were well advised, they would include a statement of the rateable value of the parish to which the school belonged, for consideration of the possible resources. There would be no difficulty, for persons with local knowledge of the varying circumstances of schools, in assessing the variety of resources, and in drawing up some simple rules for distribution; but this would be extremely difficult if left entirely to the officers of a central Department. Call into play, side by side with the officials of the Department, and subordinate to that Department, this local organisation, and, as a rule, it would be constituted on a local basis, and local knowledge would aid the enlightened and impartial judgment of the central Department. It had been said that the setting up of a new organisation would be objectionable, on the score of expense, but there would be no necessity for any great expenditure. Voluntary action would be called into play, and men would be found ready to perform these, as they performed other local duties. It was to be observed that not a penny of the aid grant would go to the association; all would go straight to the schools. There was no reason to anticipate that there would be a large number of appeals to the Education Department, because managers of schools would know that their cases had been fully and adequately discussed by their neighbours and equals, and they would be more likely to accept decisions thus arrived at with contentment than the decisions of a central and distant Department. For these reasons he considered that these associations would be of double benefit to the Department and to the schools; and he looked upon the proposal as the nucleus of a movement which would have great influence on the position of isolated events of the voluntary system. There was no reason why a portion of the grant should not be devoted to the needs of small village schools, and a special fund might be formed for the supply of special visiting teachers to go round and instruct the pupils in groups of schools. The production of accounts by managers would tend to check any abuses that exist; and he had very little doubt that, if the aid grant were properly administered through the associations, it would stimulate, rather than discourage, subscriptions, would encourage collective action where at present action was isolated, and would strengthen in future that voluntary system he desired to see continuous and flourishing. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. HENRY BROADHURST (Leicester) said the hon. Member had explained away much of the action of the proposed machinery, had shown how it might or might not be put into operation, and he said that, in many cases, it would not be availed of. If that should be so, then the administration would come back to the central office in London, bringing an increase of work for which the Department had been admitted to be unequal. This important Amendment had been moved in a most lucid and able speech by the hon. Member for Carnarvon, and he was surprised that no reply had been made by a Member of the Government. Certainly no Member of the Government could deny that it was an unprecedented thing in legislation to hand over a large sum of public money to irresponsible bodies, which, as the hon. Member had just said, might or might not come into existence, and the composition of which was as yet unknown. If these bodies were elected by the people he would have some confidence in their capacity and freedom from prejudice in administration. It was admitted that the governing bodies of these associated schools would be composed of gentlemen who had spent nearly the whole of their lives in rural districts, not many of them having had experience of the administration of large sums of public money. It was a Member of the Conservative Party who referred to the reverend gentlemen, who would no doubt have much influence in the administration of these large sums of money, as bigots. He did not adopt that language by any means, and he only quoted it to show the views held by hon. Members on the opposite side of the House. And yet it was in the names of these people they were going to intrust this annual grant of between £600,000 and £700,000—a sum which hon. Members opposite said would assuredly grow as the years went by. The case against the machinery, therefore, was all the stronger. He had stated that there was no precedent for handing over public money of this large amount to a body who would be responsible only to themselves, who would form their own constitution, who would, in the main, elect themselves and control the whole of the business of the respective districts they would form their associations for. Durng the last ten years the House had created vast machinery for the administration of the county and village affairs of this country—namely, by the Acts of 1888 and 1894. But in the case of both those Acts the local authorities so created were in the main dealing with their own rates and their own domestic affairs, and when, subsequently, the £700,000 was distributed among the County Councils for the promotion of technical education, they received instructions from the central Government as to the object for which this money was to be expended. If the Government could see their way to have two-thirds of the governing bodies set up by this Bill, elected in the ordinary way by the people of the respective divisions, then a good deal of the objection to the machinery would be removed. At present nobody seemed able to explain the machinery. One hon. Member said it need not come into existence at once, the Government representatives said it would, but they did not quite know how, when, or by whom the authorities would be constituted. Surely the two Law Officers of the Crown, whom he saw opposite, must recognise that it was a very large order to expect Members of the Opposition side of the House to agree to a proposal which was absolutely indefinite, and which gave them no assurance whatever as to what these bodies were to be composed of. He felt certain, if they had the Attorney General and Solicitor General on his side of the House, they would so riddle and pulverise this Bill in half an hour that there would not be a shred of it left to be Debated. He would vote for any proposal that was designed to make this machinery representative, intelligent, and easy to be understood, and if this could not be accomplished, then he would vote for utterly destroying what the last speaker on the other side of the House had admitted to be partly, at any rate, a sham and a delusion—["No, no!"]—because, he said, it need not come into existence.

*MR. CHANNING desired to say a few words on this Amendment, as he had put one on the Paper to the same effect. The only question really was—whether the machinery adumbrated by this extraordinary Bill was a machinery likely to carry out the object in view? His hon. Friend the Member for Somerset, had said that he would prefer something like the machinery of the Bill of last year, which provided a local authority for the distribution of the aid grant. The hon. Gentleman complained that hon. Members on the Opposition side of the House were the cause of this local authority not existing now, and said that, therefore, they ought to swallow at the point of the bayonet this system of association, as the only substitute for the local government which they had rejected. The hon. Member for Somersetshire rightly insisted on the localisation of this administrative control. But the reason the Opposition resisted the Government proposals of last year was because they were not local representative proposals. The whole effect of the Bill of last year would have been to hand over the management of the schools, not to the sort of authority which his hon. Friend contemplated, but to private managers. The whole question was whether this matter of the classification of schools, and the application of the principle of a differential grant was to be accomplished well or badly. He thought there ought to be differential grants, but there should be proper machinery to carry that principle into effect. He ventured to say that the principle of association—and compulsory association—contained in the Bill, was being very largely repudiated by the clergy of the country—especially those in the rural districts—and almost universally by the teachers. During the last few days numbers of deputations of Voluntary School teachers from their respective districts had waited upon hon. Members, and the tone of those deputations had been absolutely unanimous against this form of federation. He himself, in a previous Debate, had quoted the opinion of Canon Barker, and he might quote the opinion also of Canon Bury, of Northamptonshire, who wrote to him privately a short time ago, saying that the clergy were practically mad not to accept the principle of representative management and of something like local authority in the district to manage the schools, insisting, as a *quid pro quo*, in some form of religious teaching, accompanying that surrender of their schools to local authority. A most interesting inquiry had been initiated in the county of Worcester by one of the county papers, and he would refer to the opinions of the clergy which had been thus elicited, with respect to the question of association. Many of the clergy expressed the gravest apprehension as to the difficulty of forming these associations. One of them remarked that the Education Department was far more impartial than any such body as that proposed could be. Another was of opinion that the federation of schools would engender local strifes and bickerings. A third said that it would work very unevenly, produce much friction, and lead to endless contention and discontent. A fourth clergyman asked why the distribution of the aid grant could not be left to the Education Department in the same way as the rest of the grant, and inquired

> "What is the object of making this invidious distinction? Favouritism is intended by this proposal. This is manifest."

Another comment made by several of the clergy, including Canon Coventry, was, that the association would lead to expensive charges for printing, advertisements, secretary, and official staff for inspections, examinations, and so on, so that the 5s. grant would be very seriously lessened before it reached the schools, whilst one clergyman complained that there was likely to be favouritism and unfair treatment of one school as opposed to another. There had been a most important contribution to this discussion in a report drawn up by the Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education. This paper deserves the careful consideration of every Member of the House. It stated that these associations, if formed at all, should be formed in such a way that they would not exclude the possibility of definite local educational authorities being ultimately formed. That was a very important point to consider in view of Amendments which might be offered later as to the constitution and limits of these associations; another very important criticism offered was that the areas were altogether too large. That opinion had been expressed by another educational authority, an important ecclesiastic, Canon Nunn. The Lincoln Board insisted that the area should not be larger than the Poor Law Union, and that these associations would be only useful if local. He would like to draw special attention to a paragraph in their communication as to the possible formation of associations in the area of the present Poor Law Unions. It stated that "the ideal association would be one composed of all classes of elementary schools, Board and Voluntary, within the area and under one governing body. But the country was not yet ripe for this, although we were nearer to it than many supposed." That was a suggestion somewhat on the lines of the Bill of last year, but on wiser and more educational lines. The second form of association insisted upon an association of all Voluntary Schools within the area, irrespective of denomination; and the third form was an association according to denomination, Church Schools with Church Schools, Wesleyan with Wesleyan, and so on. This proposal was not popular with the clergy, nor with the teachers of the country. The National Union of Elementary Teachers had passed a resolution regretting the introduction in the Bill of compulsory federation of schools "Believing it to be unnecessary, calculated to diminish local effort on the part of individual schools, and likely to create a class of officials inimical to true educational elasticity." The proposal of the Bill was also unworkable. The argument which had most weight in this House against last year's Bill was the absolute impossibility from difficulties of time and space for the County Committees suggested in that Bill to do their work. If that was true of the County Committees it would be *a fortiori* true of a Diocesan Board dealing with perhaps a million of population spread over two or three counties. In an interesting article in *The Times* (evidently contributed by one of our great educational experts) the Diocesan Boards of Education were taken more or less as the type of the association which would be formed. But what was the cost of working such Boards? Last year the income of the London Diocesan Board of Education was £4,413, and the amount distributed as grants to necessitous schools was not more than £2,265. Salaries and cost of inspection amounted to £1,104, and other items brought up the cost of administration to over £2,000. It was a serious question how the associations were to be worked. Did the Government expect these important duties of the Education Department to be handed over to nondescript bodies, who, all over the country, would be compelled to raise considerable sums by voluntary subscription sufficient to pay the heavy expenses of the associations, and providing the staff to work them effectively and efficiently? The income of the Church Education Society of Northamptonshire was last year £520. Of that, only £40 was given in grants to necessitous schools, or £1 out of every ten, the whole of the rest went in expenditure for salaries, inspection of schools, cost of examinations, etc. Therefore it would be seen that the Government were imposing a serious task on the proposed associations, a task he did not think could be effectively carried out, and the Government provided no rational machinery by which they could expect reasonable results to be obtained. He thought the common sense of the House and the country would reject the machinery proposed. It was essentially unrepresentative as well as unworkable machinery. The spirit which underlay the Bill was that of withdrawing a large sphere of popular education from the control of the representatives of the people, and from the wholesome influence of public opinion. In parishes with which they were familiar, local opinion had a strong effect in dealing with the evils of the "one man" system, but there could be no control of local public opinion over these mysterious bodies now proposed to be set up. They had no representative character whatever, and their proceedings could not be checked in any way by any existing body. These associations would be absolutely irresponsible, they would act in secret, they would not regard local opinion, but would be the instruments of a gigantic sacerdotal organisation to carry out a policy which one of his clerical friends had rightly characterised as a deliberate attempt to un-Protestantise the English people, and place the control of the education of the children under the absolute power of the extremists of the High Church Party. [*Ministerial cries of* "No!"] The action of our voluntary associations, whether he took their effect in preserving Voluntary Schools and preventing their extinction, their action towards teachers, or the amount they had distributed from central funds towards preserving our Voluntary Schools, had been of great importance as regarded our voluntary and denominational system. As the Bill was framed the associations had no control of any sort over the local management of our Voluntary and denominational Schools, and the only power they had was to advise the Education Department in connection with the distribution of the 5s. grant. The whole responsibility for that distribution, it was perfectly clear, rested entirely with the Education Department. He would ask hon. Members to look at Sub-section (4), which showed that the Department would be responsible to that House in reference to the distribution of this 5s. grant exactly to the same extent that it was at present in regard to every parliamentary grant or fee grant, which extended at present to about 30s. a head. Did any hon. Gentleman opposite really believe that these funds were to be distributed at the will of an irresponsible body over which Parliament had no direct control? Directly the contrary was stated in the Bill, and these federations and associations were only advisory and consultative bodies. As soon as it was understood that these associations could not interfere with local management, and were only consultative bodies, all objection to these proposals would be done away with. As to compulsion, surely these bodies could not be called compulsory in the ordinary sense of the term. There was no compulsion whatever exercised on any school to enter into any of these associations. [AN HON. MEMBER: "Section 5."] Section 5 said that if a particular school acted unreasonably in not entering into a federation or association it might lose the benefit of the 5s. grant. But was it compulsion because they were asked not to act unreasonably? ["Hear, hear!"] These associations were in the true sense of the term voluntary. As regarded the areas over which these associations were to be formed, they might be formed either on the diocesan basis or that of archdeaconries, in connection with the area of local Government, or the areas of the Inspectors of the Education Department. To his mind the Education Department was the responsible body in this case. To his mind the best areas would be the areas now formed by Inspectors under the Education Department; but that was a matter of detail. Apart from association by area, this Bill would allow association by denomination, and he thought that was a most important element in the proposal of the Government. The Wesleyan Schools might, for instance, form one association and the Roman Catholic Schools another. Objection had also been raised to the proposal of the Bill on the score of expense. He did not see why there should be any great expense thrown on those associations. To a great extent they would have discharged the duties put upon them when they had advised the Education Department on the distribution of the grant among the necessitous Voluntary Schools, and they would have a stable system which was unlikely to be altered from time to time.

*SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Monmouthshire, W.): We have now reached a portion of the Bill which I confess has most interested me, and has filled me with greater curiosity than any other part of the Measure. I had hoped for assistance in regard to a subject on which I feel myself entirely uninformed, from the able speech of the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, but I regret to say he has given me very little light indeed. ["Hear, hear!"] He has told me a great many things that these voluntary associations are not to do, but he has not explained to me, at all events in full, what they are going to do. First of all he says there is no compulsion. We do not mean to say that there is any blockade—[*laughter*]—or anything of that sort about the Measure; but we have all read about *auri sacra fames*—that famine which compels people to do a great many things which are better left undone. [*Laughter.*] The hon. Member has told us that the main object of these associations is to distribute a large sum of money, and he believes there will be very little difficulty about that. I can conceive of associations, having common objects, getting on very well together. But what I want to know is whether the object for which these gentlemen will meet is a common object upon which they are all agreed. I should think it is exactly the reverse of the case. [*Cheers.*] The gentlemen who meet will, each of them, have as his object the getting as much of this money as he can for his own objects and allowing as little as possible of it to go to any one else. [*Laughter and cheers.*] That, I say, will be the main effort of these voluntary associations.

First of all, they are going to fight for this money. It will be like the battle we read of in our childish days of "The lion and the unicorn fighting for the crown"—the silver crown—[*laughter*]—and whether the lion or the unicorn will beat the other "all round the town" will be the question which will have to be decided in the arena of these voluntary associations. [*Cheers and laughter.*] I have endeavoured to picture to myself what these voluntary associations will do when they are gathered together. I cannot really expect any great light upon the matter either from the First Lord of the Treasury or from the Solicitor General, because they have no practical experience of what I may call English school life. They come from a country which is notoriously indifferent to pecuniary considerations. [*Laughter.*] I am not certain that the question whether one man or one school was to get more or less money than another would ever influence the disinterested soul of a Scotchman. [*Laughter.*] But in England we are not all so constituted. [*Laughter.*] Then what is it that these associations will do when they are gathered together? We have heard from that rare authority the Vice President of the Council that he thinks a population of a million would be the most convenient unit for an association. I do not know how much "parson-power" a population of a million would yield. [*Laughter.*] I suppose it would differ in different parts of the country. The collected clergy from a million of population in the part of the country in which I live would be gathered from a large and extensive region, whereas in that part of the country which the First Lord represents it would be a little more condensed. Well, these rectors, vicars, and archdeacons from a million population would be gathered together, and according to the number of children in that population they would have a certain sum to scramble for. It might be in one district £5,000, in another district £10,000, and in the huge district which the First Lord represents it might be £50,000. Now I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that from my experience of English parsons, when they have got £20,000 or £50,000 to scramble for, there will be differences of opinion among them as to how much each should acquire. Even the rectors and even the archdeacons are human. I do not go higher—[*laughter*]—and ascribe natural frailty to Deans and Bishops, but there will only be a few of these superior spirits in this collection. And there will be managers more ecclesiastically minded, perhaps, even than the clergy themselves. What would be the first operation which would occur in this voluntary association? As I understand, the clergymen would not have any pecuniary interest in the matter, because, as the right hon. Gentleman told us last night, the clergy are not to subscribe to anything except the Thirty-nine Articles. [*Cheers and laughter.*] That is to be their spiritual contribution to the denominational schools. [*Laughter.*] But the association being met, I want the right hon. Gentleman to explain to us exactly its practical operation, because all this was passed over by the hon. and learned Member for Stroud. The Amendment is a very proper one to raise this question, because I believe that the word we are discussing is the word "if." [*Laughter and cheers.*] If these managers from this million of population are gathered together, what is the first thing they will do? It is quite plain that the parson of Whiteacre will come forward and say, "Here is £20,000. What am I to have? I am necessitous." [*Laughter.*] Of course, he will say that first of all. [*Renewed laughter.*] "I am the most necessitous parson among all the parsons present, and I ought to have the largest sum. Five shillings per child is nothing. I ought to have 15s., 20s., or 25s. per head of the scholars. I have got, it is true, a great landowner in my neighbourhood. But he has large mortgages; he is subject to agricultural distress; and he gives only £5 to the school." And what will the other few hundred managers say to him? [*Cheers.*] They will say, "If this parson gets 20s., what will be left for us? The fund will be diminished so greatly." Therefore, an amendment will be proposed—an amendment that the words "twenty shillings" do not stand part of the Resolution. [*Laughter and cheers.*] In fact, everyone will propose an amendment cutting down this 20s. It will be in the interests of everyone present. Even the managers of Voluntary Schools, not from sordid motives, but from denominational zeal, will desire to get the largest sum for their own schools. ["Hear, hear!"] Each man will find it necessary to make his own case good. Another man will claim 20s., or even more, and the others will turn upon him and say, "You are very well off. You have not a necessitous peer as the owner of the land in your parish; you have a prosperous and munificent brewer." [*Much laughter and cheers.*] "He gives you £50, and as he becomes more prosperous he becomes more denominational." [*Laughter and cheers.*] "He is a great subscriber, and we cannot give you 20s. You are the happy man who owns the brewer, and we are thrown back on the necessitous peer." [*Laughter.*] This is the sort of discussion which will be the foundation of the scheme of the Government—[*cheers*]—which is to advise the Vice President of the Committee of Council. [*Laughter.*] This is the sagacious scheme of distribution propounded by the Government. It is a very ingenious scheme, until you come to test it by the facts, which everyone who has real acquaintance with the subject knows must be the practical operation of this scheme. [*Cheers.*] I should like to know where this extraordinary scheme had its origin. [*Cheers.*]

> "Tell me where is fancy bred—
> Or in the heart, or in the head?"

I think this scheme must have been bred in the heart. I am sure it has not been bred in the head. [*Laughter and cheers.*] I cannot think that the Vice President of the Council will rise and say that he was the author of this plan. [*Laughter.*] But this is the process that is to be gone through. I do not know how long it will take, because it is obvious that no parson who wishes to do his duty to his parish and his school will fail to advance the largest possible claim, and to produce all the circumstances which may sustain that claim. And he will stand in the presence of his sworn foes, whose interest it will be to cut down the claim as far as possible. Then there come in the people better off; and they are to bring their 5s. into hotch-potch. But they will feel, every one of them, that they ought to have that 5s., or more. I never heard of any manager who did not think he wanted all the money he could get. ["Hear, hear!"] The wealthiest school will want its 5s.; and the whole of this congregation will be like what one has seen sometimes in a flock of rooks, where the whole flock is combined against a sick rook. [*Laughter and cheers.*] I must say that this seems to me one of the most extraordinary schemes that I ever heard of. Everybody has seen what happens, too often, among relations when a wealthy relative had died. It does not produce domestic harmony always, but to gather together an enormous unnumbered body of ecclesiastics from a population of a million, and to set down before them £50,000 to be scrambled for is the most extraordinary scheme for the harmonious distribution of public money among volunteers I have ever heard of. ["Hear, hear!"] And yet this is the project of what are called voluntary associations. I am afraid that when the discussion is over there will be a good deal that is not voluntary in the transaction. [*Laughter.*] And before they come to their decision, I think there must be at least one division upon each school, with many amendments. Whether they will use the closure as freely as it is employed in this House—[*cheers*]—I cannot say; but at all events the discussion will be of a protracted character before they arrive at a conclusion on the scheme which is to enlighten the Vice President of the Committee of Council. [*Laughter.*] I have observed, with much regret, during these discussions a certain reserve and melancholy in the appearance of the Vice President. [*Laughter.*] I never understood what was the reason of it, but now I quite understand it is the prospect of this advice which he is to receive from the voluntary associations. [*Laughter.*] Just picture to yourselves what is to be the function and the office of the Vice President when he receives this scheme. It will be a record of the bickerings and the quarrels of all these ecclesiastics as to the sum which each is to receive. Every one of them, I imagine, will appeal to him to redress the injustice of which he has been the victim. [*Laughter.*] Then the Vice President, who is to have, as the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite tells him, an absolute power to remould this scheme, is to encounter the ecclesiastics from a population of a million and to re-judge their acts, to redress their injustice, and to give to those who have not received what they ought to have had, and to take away from those who have got what they ought not to have had. [*Laughter.*] This is to be the function of the Vice President in regard to those advisers who have been quarrelling over the £50,000. I do not wonder that, in prospect of that, the Vice President appears thoughtful. [*Loud laughter.*] It has often been said of advice that it is a thing that is constantly offered but which is seldom taken; and I should think, probably, with that maxim in his mind, the Vice President might pluck up his spirits—[*laughter*]—and consider that the best thing he could do with the schemes framed by the voluntary associations would be to throw them into the waste paper basket and not endeavour to examine their construction or compose the quarrels of those who have laid the schemes before him. But I would really ask, is this a practical question? They are not the ideals which the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite has said they are. He has told us they are not going to govern the schools. We know that very well. He has told us that, in the ordinary sense of the word, there is no compulsion. We know that very well. They have, he said, only to distribute the money. But what sort of an "only" is that? ["Hear, hear!"] It is like the "if" we have to consider in the Amendment. Applying to it ordinary intelligence and some experience of the questions, and the districts, and the habits of the people who will have to deal with this question, unless some very different explanation can be given than any yet offered, I must pronounce it to be the most preposterous and absurd scheme that was ever submitted to the judgment of the House of Commons. [*Cheers.*]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY, who was received with Ministerial cheers, said: Perhaps I am not a wholly impartial critic of the Debates we have now been conducting for four or five nights in Committee, but we have wanted hitherto, in my judgment, two things—wisdom and liveliness. I do not say the right hon. Gentleman opposite has contributed the wisdom—[*laughter and cheers*]—but I will do him the justice to say that he has given us an ample dose of liveliness, which makes up for many hours of somewhat weary discussion. Before I meet the special arguments or the special jokes—[*laughter*]—for joke and argument were so indistinguishable that I hardly know which to call them—[*laughter*]—of the right hon. Gentleman, let me remind the Committee in one sentence what the problem is we have got to discuss in this sub-section. The Committee has already decided that a sum, amounting in the present year to about £600,000 odd, is to be given to the Voluntary Schools. It has also decided that that money is not to be given to Voluntary Schools at a fixed rate of 5s. a head. It has left undetermined the machinery by which that distribution is to take place, and no one has suggested, as far as I know, that there is open to our choice any machinery except the alternative machinery of the Department unassisted by associations or the Department assisted by associations. ["Hear, hear!"] That is, at the stage at which we have arrived, the solitary problem we have to determine. The only alternative that lies before us is whether the Department, in allocating this £600,000 odd among the Voluntary Schools of the country, is to be assisted by the associations to be formed under the Bill, or is it to be left absolutely without any assistance to deal with that difficult problem alone? I think, put in that way—and that is a fair way of putting it—the Committee will come to the conclusion we have come to, that there is no alternative but, as far as possible to call into existence associations by which the difficulties of the distribution may be met. I do not deny that the difficulty is a great difficulty. I do not deny that there may be special difficulties connected with associations. All I say is that, on the broad issue which I venture to say is now before the Committee, there can be no doubt that the *primâ facie* verdict of the Committee will be that the associations should be called into existence, if it be possible to call them into existence, in order to assist the Department in the difficult task which the Bill, as already passed, lays upon them. ["Hear, hear!"] Having thus presented the problem to the Committee, let me consider the objections which the right hon. Gentleman brought to the scheme which we have suggested. He starts with a preliminary presumption against the Government, because he says that my hon. and learned Friend on my right and myself, who have been very deeply concerned with the drafting and the defence of the Bill, are both Scotchmen, and are, therefore, as he would imply, incapable of appreciating those niceties of clerical life in England, of which the right hon. Gentleman has been so happy an exponent. [*Laughter.*] I gather from the right hon. Gentleman that it is his good fortune to move habitually during the recess in clerical circles. [*Laughter.*] I gather that when he retires from the labours of this House, he goes down to his rural retreat, and there meets in happy daily converse the managers of Voluntary Schools. [*Laughter.*] He discusses their difficulties with them, and I have no doubt largely subscribes to their schools—[*laughter*]—and is thoroughly acquainted with their modes of thought, and the views they entertain upon the problem of the maintenance of the Voluntary Schools. I do not doubt the right hon. Gentleman's superior knowledge of English clerical life, but I cannot help thinking, though perhaps from a greater distance and under greater disadvantages, that I have formed at least as just, as I certainly have formed a far more favourable, estimate of the clergy and the power of co-operation among the clergy in all districts of England, whether rural or urban. [*Cheers.*] The right hon. Gentleman, I believe, both by residence and by heredity, is more qualified to have an opinion upon this subject than I can pretend to have, and yet I think that, perhaps because I look at the matter in a more sympathetic spirit, my judgment is not less to be trusted than his upon that question. The right hon. Gentleman has drawn a picture of how one of these associations is to be occupied in connection with the distribution of the sum allocated to it under this Bill. It was not a flattering picture. The right hon. Gentleman seems to have called into existence a picture of—should I be violating the rules of order, Mr. Lowther, if I said 100 Harcourts?—[*laughter*]—all in holy orders—[*more laughter*]—and all scrambling—to use his own classic phrase—for a share of this 5s. grant for their own pet particular school. [*Ironical cheers.*] The right hon. Gentleman is an ornament of an assembly which no doubt does, I will not say scramble, but it does engage in an internecine warfare among its various Members, is divided into a Government and Opposition, and the Opposition at all events are very ready to bring forward any argument they can in favour of the policy they pursue. But why are we to assume, why ought we to assume, that when you bring together a set of gentlemen all concerned in keeping up the standard of Voluntary Education, all equally desirous to maintain the present system of education, that they are all going to scramble for these 5s. which are given by the State, squabbling like so many fishwives for the amount they can drag into their own net? [*Cheers.*] I may be sanguine, but for my part I draw a picture of a very different assemblage from that which the right hon. Gentleman has called forth from his too lively imagination. I do not disguise from the Committee, and at no stage have I attempted to disguise, that there are difficulties and dangers connected with this scheme of association. I have never concealed the fact that public spirit, patriotism, some desire for a common object as opposed to an individual and personal gain, are requisite if these associations are to work for education in general and for voluntary education in particular. But is there anything either in the character of the clergy of the Church of England or in the experience which we have of certain relatively small and insignificant associations which have already been called into existence to help the Voluntary Schools—is there anything in either set of considerations which may lead us to believe that these associations are to be composed of isolated units which squabble for their own interests, each absolutely dead to the interests of the whole? I do not believe, and never will believe until experience demonstrates it to me, that the associations which will be, I trust, called into existence will be so selfish, so degraded, and, above all, so short-sighted a body as the right hon. Gentleman has represented. On the contrary, I think all the experience we have had—and that experience, though not large, is not insignificant—leads me to believe that there will be no material difficulty either in bringing these associations into existence or in inducing them when they have been brought into existence to work, not each for the benefit of the particular representative or separate individual concerned, but for the common benefit of the great object for which the association itself is called into being. ["Hear, hear!"] After all, in this country, are we not familiar with public assemblies of every sort, kind, and description, from the Houses of Parliament to county councils, town councils, parish councils, Poor Law Boards, and all the rest of it? Are we unduly proud of ourselves when we say it is a characteristic of Englishmen, when they come together, that they are capable of working together for a common and public object? [*Cheers.*] Are the clergy, and the clergy alone in this country, absolutely incapable of this public spirit and of joining in common effort for a common end? [*Cheers.*] I do not for one moment credit it, and, though I will not attempt to minimise either the difficulties or the responsibilities which will be thrown upon those associations by this Bill, I will say that I believe they will be found equal to those difficulties and responsibilities. [*Cheers.*] I believe that one of the great motives of the opposition to this clause of the Bill is that hon. Gentlemen know that, if these associations be worked as we think and believe they will be worked, nothing will strengthen the Voluntary School system of this country more, nothing will tend to put it on a more permanent and more stable basis, than the fact that the managers of Voluntary Schools can meet together, can discuss their common object, and can co-operate together to meet, by the help of the money given, the needs which they respectively feel. [*Cheers.*] These are reasons which, in my judgment, make this sub-section of Clause (1) even a more valuable part of the Bill to the Voluntary Schools than the 5s. grant, and I boldly make my confession to the Committee, subject, of course, to all the scorn and criticism that will be heaped upon me if this Bill is a failure, that at this moment my hopes for the good effects of this Measure are more largely founded upon this sub-section dealing with associations, than upon any other part of the Bill which we have the honour to present to the Commitee. [*Loud cheers.*]

*MR. J. H. YOXALL (Nottingham, W.) sincerely trusted that the hopes and anticipations of the right hon. Gentleman would be fulfilled, but he doubted if that would be the case. The right hon. Gentleman had referred to certain associations that had already been in existence, but he had not specified them. Those

associations had been of two kinds. The first kind was such as that which was found in a southern diocese, where a good many thousand pounds had been raised by the donations of laymen and placed in the hands of the Council of the diocese; those subscriptions had been distributed to the necessitous schools; they had been distributed wisely, and no friction had arisen. The absence of friction, however, was due to the fact that each individual school manager, on behalf of each individual school child, had no claim and had not had a 5s. piece per child in view. Under this Bill, for every child in a Voluntary School a 5s. piece per year would be due, and, therefore, the manager, on behalf of each child, would feel, in the first place, that he must get for each child that 5s. piece, and would object most naturally to transfer that 5s. piece to any other school under any other manager; and, therefore, the example which the right hon. Gentleman gave of associations working well was not one in point. The second class of school associations had been of a smaller and less beneficial character. It had been an association, not of generous donors to the funds of schools, but of certain poor schools, and from those associations the wealthy schools had held aloof, for the reason that they had not cared to have their incomes pooled with the incomes of the smaller schools. It had been pointed out that there would be no compulsion to associate. Unless a school did associate, however, it would lose all chance of the 5s. piece per child. He imagined, therefore, that this plan was a bribe held out to all schools to associate, and as many schools as possible would be forced to associate. He perceived that this grant was a first step towards the association of schools for all purposes, and the pooling of all grants to the schools. There would be diocesan federations and diocesan councils, and they would say to every school, "You must consent to associate for the purpose of all grants; if you do not associate we will not give you any special grant at all." If a school refused to associate, not merely for the purpose of the 5s. grant, but of all other grants then the 5s. grant would be withheld from it. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] If a enemy of the Voluntary Schools had proposed this scheme he would not have wondered at it. The clergymen in all parts of the country were protesting against it —["Divide!"] — Voluntary School teachers in all parts of the country were protesting against it. [*Renewed cries of* "Divide!"] Those who knew the facts were opposed to the proposal, and those who supported the proposal would have cause to regret it in time to come. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. LOUGH said the Leader of the House really based his support of these associations on two arguments. He said that the representatives of the different schools would have a common object. Perhaps someone who believed in the Bill would show them where the common object came in. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] The right hon. Gentleman asked the Leader of the Opposition why he assumed there would be a scramble. The reason was that there would be something to scramble for. The associations had to prepare schemes which, no doubt, in nine cases out of ten, would be adopted without any correction by the Education Department. The right hon. Gentleman was not whole-hearted in support of the scheme, for he acknowledged he saw grave difficulties and dangers. If this scheme were surrounded by grave difficulties and dangers, the House of Commons ought not to lightly accept it. He thought his best friends would think that he had gone too far in support of these associations. He said that there would be no complaint of anyone to come into them. That was a rather bold statement. He thought that the hon. and learned Member was put up because he was a little more courageous than others. He had to interpret this word unreasonably. This was one of the dangerous points of the Bill which they had been criticising all along. The hon. Member had explained to them that the associations would not control the schools; but what, then, were their functions? He believed that if they were to find out the true genesis of these associations, they must not confine themselves to that Bill, but go back to the Bill of last year. Under the Bill of last year there was an elective principle under the County Council, but under the present Bill the association had no elective principle at all. He should like to have some explanation of the position of these associations in London. How would the principle be carried out as to Wesleyan Schools and Catholic Schools? Would the destinies of these schools be committed to the hands of one association?

MR. JAMES BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) said that he did not think that the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury had thrown much light upon the points upon which hon. Members on the Opposition side of the House desired information. The right hon. Gentleman had said nothing as to the area that these associations were to cover, or as to the manner in which the schools were to be represented upon them. The only one point that appeared to be clear in the statement of the right hon. Gentleman was, that these associations would be composed of clergymen.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said that the hypothesis of the right hon. Gentleman was not his.

MR. BRYCE said that the right hon. Gentleman could not refer to a single precedent for a sum of money being handed over to an irresponsible body for distribution among its constituents without any check or control being exercised over that distribution. Ths large sum of £600,000 of public money was to be handed over to a body who would not be responsible for its expenditure to the Legislature of the country. It was all the more important, therefore, that the House should have some idea of what these associations were to be composed. They would have to determine many questions in a way that he assumed would be in accordance with justice to the different schools. He thought that, in the peculiar circumstances of the case, the House were entitled to an assurance from the Government that these associations would be fully representative in their character, would be composed of the best elements, and would do full justice to the schools among whom this money was to be divided. They had been told that the associations were to be of a diocesan character, and were to be formed upon diocesan lines, for the purpose of administering the money to be provided for technical education. That was a very different thing from the statement that the associations were to represent different areas for the purpose of administering the education grant, and in his view that constituted an additional reason why the rules should be laid upon the Table of the House before they came into operation. It had been said that the diocesan areas were much too large, and he himself should much prefer that the area of the Poor Law Unions should be adopted. Was it certain that the Roman Catholic Schools and the Wesleyan Schools would combine with the Church of England Schools on these associations for their common benefit? If the Education Department were to address itself seriously to the question of the distribution of this grant, he thought that they could discharge the duty better than the associations, which were formed upon denominational lines could do. He suggested to the Commitee that this was a question which ought not to be decided now. It was not a question which the Education Department ought to be allowed to consider as having been determined for in these Debates. It was a matter which ought to come before the House when the schemes had been formed and the Department had considered them, and it would be a great misfortune if the Committee were to give a blank cheque to the Department and leave them to constitute associations which might afterwards prove not to be constituted on the best lines. ["Hear, hear!"] That was one point which suggested itself for further consideration, and he would now mention another. The Government had promised a Bill on Secondary Education, and he hoped that promise would be fulfilled, either this Session or next. ["Hear, hear!"] In that connection there existed at present a great diversity of areas and authorities, and there was a consequent waste of money. A Secondary Education Bill ought to consolidate authorities and areas, and the question of the authorities under this Bill ought to be reserved for further consideration by the House next Session, when the Education Department had had time to prepare schemes. There was one point in which elementary schools very closely touched Secondary Education. The higher elementary schools were practically secondary schools, and it was therefore extremely important that the authority administering elementary schools should, for the future, be subject to the Secondary Education authority. ["Hear, hear!"] There was one other point to which he would like to call the attention of the Committee. It had been represented to him, and he felt bound to say a word or two upon it, there were many Voluntary Schools which had been under the management of energetic men, keenly alive to the importance of improving the education of the country, who had raised their schools to a point of efficiency beyond what was required by the Education Department. These educational reformers were conducting educational experiments of the greatest importance, and they were afraid that the introduction of these associations might hamper them in their work, which they were now carrying on in such an enlightened spirit. ["Hear, hear!"] That was a thing which he thought the Committee ought to guard against by taking care that, while those associations were framed on large and liberal lines, they should not be so powerful as to be able to override and hamper the liberty of individual managers. ["Hear, hear!"] That was a point which, he contended, ought not to be left to the Education Department to determine, but ought to be reserved for further consideration by the House. For the reasons he had given he conceived that the Amendment of his hon. Friend would be a very valuable addition to the Bill, and he would have no hesitation in voting for it. ["Cheers."]

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): It appears to me that the issue in this sub-section was an extremely simple one, but there was some danger of its being overladen with a cloud of words from the other side of the House. [*Ministerial cheers.*] Hon. Gentlemen opposite are most anxious for information as to the intentions and meaning of the Government, and it is extraordinary what a length of time they take in explaining the several matters on which they want information. [*Laughter.*] I assume their perfect good faith. I assume their real desire to understand the intentions of the Government and their inability to understand the terms of the Bill—[*Ministerial cheers and laughter*]—and I do not attribute to them the slightest desire to delay a Bill with the main object of which, we have been told again and again, they have the greatest sympathy. I think I can give in a very few words the explanation they desire.

The object of the Government is to relieve necessitous schools, and for that purpose a certain amount of money is to be appropriated, and the desire of the Government is that not one single penny of that money shall go to schools which are not necessitous, and that it shall go to those schools which are necessitous in the proportions necessary to save them from extinction. Considering that you are dealing with a vast number of schools in altogether exceptional and varying circumstances, it will be seen that that is a complicated object to attain, and I defy the wisdom of this House, even the wisdom of the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, to devise any statutory provision which will secure that object without giving any discretion to somebody or other. If that is disputed, let some hon. Gentleman propose an Amendment which will secure that which I believe to be the common object of the House—let some hon. Gentleman propose a scheme which will secure in statutory terms and by statutory provisions that only necessitous schools shall get this money and only in the proportions in which they severally require it. I say there is no means of securing that result except by giving discretion to some body to deal with the circumstances of each particular case as they arise. The circumstances vary in each particular case according to the time when they have to be considered. If you laid down a rule which would apply fairly to all existing schools, it would be altogether inapplicable in the course of another twelve months, because the circumstances of the schools would have changed. The Government propose to leave the sole discretion with the Education Department. It is an entire mistake, and shows a very slight conception of the meaning and intention of the Bill, to talk, as the hon. Member for West Islington did, about leaving this power with the Associations. It is left to the Education Department, which has the best means of ascertaining the circumstances of different schools at different times through its inspectors—[*Opposition cheers*]—through the system which has, on the whole, worked satisfactorily in the distribution of the existing grant. The Leader of the Opposition agrees so far. [Sir W. HARCOURT assented.] Then the Government have thought that even a Government Department, and even the Education Department, may not be perfect; that even the Education Department, with its inspectors and its knowledge, cannot be aware of all the facts connected with all the schools with which it has to deal. The Government have thought, therefore, that it would be advantageous to encourage advisory Associations which might lay before the Department facts which, at any rate, it might reasonably take into consideration. That is all the section does. It encourages the formation of Associations which may submit to the Department, to be used or not at its sole discretion, facts and information which otherwise it could not know. In these few circumstances I have explained the object of the clause, and it does not appear to me to justify much further discussion. ["Hear, hear!"]

SIR FRANK LOCKWOOD thought the Committee would feel obliged to the right hon. Gentleman for his excessively patronising speech—["hear, hear!"]—in reply to a great many Members who had taken the trouble to attend the Debate. The right hon. Gentleman had looked in at about half-past 11. [Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: "Five minutes past."] He was quite ready to concede to the right hon. Gentleman the advantage of the additional 20 minutes; but he thought that short time might have been put to much better use by the right hon. Gentleman, because he did not appear to have derived any real information with regard to the question under discussion. ["Hear, hear!"] The right hon. Gentleman had told them that it was a mere matter of leaving these questions to the discretion of the Education Department. They had not been enlightened, however, on this subject by the responsible Minister of the Department who was present. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. LEONARD COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin), who was met with some cries of "Divide," said: I wish to explain the grounds upon which I propose to vote. We must assume what has been done already, and take up our position at the point which has been reached by the Committee. It has been decided that a sum of £600,000 is to be distributed among necessitous schools. The only point that now remains to the Committee, according to the Leader of the House, is whether that sum should be distributed at the discretion and according to the means of knowledge of the Education Department, or whether they should be assisted by associations called upon to advise them as to distribution. I admit that this is the exact point which we have reached. But it may well be that the Committee, considering the character of the proposed associations, will hesitate to give to them the power to advise, which will in fact prove much more than a power to advise, and should bear against it, leaving the distribution entirely to the discretion of the Education Department. According to the First Lord of the Treasury that would be a task of insuperable difficulty for the Education Department to overcome; but that is not the line taken by the Secretary for the Colonies, though I believe it to be an actual representation of the case. The effect of these two conclusions would be that, although we have advanced so far as to declare that £600,000 should be distributed among the necessitous schools, we might, on further consideration, arrive at the conclusion that the distribution is impossible, and it must be made on the lines of absolute equality among all the schools that are to benefit. In other words, we would be obliged to contribute the 5s. per scholar to schools all round. That is one of the points now remaining for discussion. If we refuse to accept the proposal of calling these associations into existence, and if, realising the result of that refusal, we should come to the conclusion that the Education Department was unable to carry out the process of distribution, of discrimination, we might at a later stage revert to the question of equal distribution; so that is yet involved in the issue before the Committee. But, for my own part, I am prepared, under certain conditions not immediately arising, to assent to the process recommended by the Government in this Bill. ["Hear, hear!"] But I do not disguise from myself that in doing this we are entering on a far-reaching and pregnant proposal. [*Cheers.*] This is a Bill for the assistance of denominational schools. The House of Commons, reflecting in this the mind of the nation, has arrived at the conclusion that denominational schools have claims for assistance and support. [*Cheers.*] That has been admitted by hon. Members opposite; and the question comes, in what way should this support be accorded to denominational schools frankly recognised as such? You propose to call associations into existence which will advise the Education Department. My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Stroud, preceding the Secretary for the Colonies, has insisted on the fact that the Education Department will exercise supreme authority and that the discretion will rest with it. Technically that is true; but can any hon. Member suppose that a scheme, having been approved by an association and submitted to the Education Department, will be open to reconsideration in detail? Shall we as Members be solicited by the managers of this or that school to go to the Education Department and press upon it the fact that this or that school has been unjustly treated by the association of which it is a member? The supposition is inconsistent with the ordinary facts and conduct of Parliamentary life. No; we are calling this association into existence, we are recognising denominational education as part of the general education of the future? What will follow? What is involved in this proposition? It is this. Will you allow the Church of England to organise itself, that is the whole question; are you going to allow the Church of England as an educational body, having connection with denominational schools, to organise itself? The proposal of the Government is to allow such a thing to be done, to accept the organisation which may be instituted, and to allow the recommendation of that organisation practically to take the place of the discretion of the Education Department. [*Opposition cheers.*] I do not shrink from the consequence; I am going to support the consequence on proper conditions, but hon. Members may suppose that nothing short of that is involved in this general realisation of what is the scope and what is intended by the Bill. The noble Lord below me understands that quite well, and it is a thing which all members of the Church will understand and realise. Now, there is no difficulty as to the way in which this scheme would work in regard to one of the denominations spoken of—the Wesleyan denomination. It will probably be referred to the education department of the Wesleyan Conference; and, having regard to the democratic character which on the whole characterises that body, it will very likely happen that the associations called into existence under it will not extend beyond the Wesleyan circuit, or, at most, the county. As to the Roman Catholic body, which is the next, and which may be rightly considered as leading us a further step, I apprehend that there will be no difficulty whatever in the organisation of that body; it is already organised. But I suppose the whole of the funds going to Roman Catholic schools will not be handed over to one central body, but probably to diocesan bodies of that Church. In the same way we may assume that the body that will be called into existence to facilitate the distribution of those funds allocated to the Church of England schools will be bodies from the diocese. You will have a diocesan body framing the scheme in each diocese for the distribution of the funds. That, if properly conducted, will be part of the inevitable machinery to be called into existence if the Church of England is to be self-governed; it must be called into existence if we recognise denominational education is in the future to be part of the national system of education. It will depend on the character of the organisation in each diocese, and here I come to the condition under which I am prepared to support the scheme. You do not know how these organisations will work, what form they will assume; you cannot tell if the clerical element will predominate, you cannot say if the lay element will be sufficiently represented, or whether there will be provision as to concurrent action of the lay and clerical element; therefore my one safeguard in accepting this proposal as a temporary shift lies in this, the removal from the scheme of that element which puts restraint on any school to come into an organisation; take out the power to force a school into an association, then you may allow the experiment to work, you may see how it works, you may watch it and judge its effect; schools may go in or come out of the organisation, and the organisation would prove whether it deserved permanent support and would justify itself or fail to do so. ["Hear!"] But the question now before us is, supposing we do not fall back on the principle of equal division per head, the principle before us is no more and no less than this: Are you prepared, in pursuance of the organisation of denominational education, to allow the Church of England to organise itself by dioceses? I am prepared to try that experiment, but, by way of safeguarding my own position, I propose to support the ultimate proposal to make the Bill temporary in its operation, and to be removed if Parliament desires. Subject to that, and subject to the removal of the compulsory element, I am prepared to support the scheme now before us and to allow the Church to organise its schools. [*Cheers.*]

Mr. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.) said the Leader of the House had contributed an important speech to the discussions upon the Bill. He had put his views before the Committee in a frank and clear manner, and as to these associations and their effect, he had expressed a confident hope that they would carry out the object for which they were designed. The right hon. Gentleman also uttered a note of warning that if these associations did not carry out the object in the spirit anticipated, the result would be a serious blow to the cause of denominational education. One point should be made clear in reference to these associations and the Education Department. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Colonies said the only power these associations would have would be to submit schemes for approval. But the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bodmin had clearly shown that their power would be much more than that. There are, under the Welsh Intermediate Education Act of 1889, powers given to governing bodies of forming and submitting schemes to the Education Department; but, as hon. Members well knew, the Department never interfered in those schemes unless they contained something contrary to the spirit of the Act or injurious to the interests affected. He could not agree with the Leader of the House in his statement of belief that the clergy of the country were unanimous in favour of these associations. He believed the reverse was the case. He had abundant evidence on that point, but he would not delay the Committee by quoting it. He believed the reason the clergymen of this country, as a class, would not welcome the formation of these associations was, because they considered that they would be dominated, so far as the Church of England associations were concerned, by the Bishops of each diocese. Canon Barker, in a letter to *The Times* of the 13th February, on this very point, asked for what purpose it was proposed to elect these new bodies? He went on to say that the Education Department had laid down the principle, they were already in possession of the facts as to the schools, and what information, the reverend gentleman asked, could the associations supply them with which would easily be obtained by them from the inspectors, concluding by expressing the opinion that the formation of the associations would lead to no end of friction and difficulties. That was the view of a representative clergyman, who had taken a great interest in this question, and was devoted to the cause of denominational education. For these reasons he should strongly support the Amendment of his hon. Friend.

Viscount CRANBORNE (Rochester) desired to ask a simple question arising out of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Colonies, who had said that the association to be created under this clause would be a purely advisory body, which the Education Department would be at liberty to ignore or agree with as they thought fit. He presumed that as long as the scheme was in operation and approved the Department would be bound by it and would not be able to ignore it.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL: If the scheme is approved by the Department it will, of course, be acted upon so long as that scheme continues to be approved. [*Opposition laughter.*]

Mr. ABEL THOMAS (Carmarthen, E.) observed that hon. Members on that side of the House had been twitted by the Secretary of State for the Colonies with their ignorance of the meaning of the words in this clause. Four Gentlemen on the other side had addressed themselves to the question of whether the Education Department or the association was to decide how the money was to be divided. The hon. and learned Member for the Stroud Division asserted there was no doubt that the meaning of this passage was, that the Education Department alone were the persons who were to decide how the money was to be divided. The next speech on the other side, that of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House, was directed to show that the persons who were to have the power of dividing the money were not the Department, but the association only. Then they had the speech of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, who threw over the First Lord of the Treasury, because he said the Department were to decide what was to be done with the money, but subject to a little advice from the association. Next they had the right hon. Member for Bodmin, who returned again to the First Lord of the Treasury, and suggested that the persons who had to divide the money were the association and not the Department. He must say that hon. Members opposite were as ignorant of the meaning of this passage as hon. Members on his side of the House; and he really thought the Committee ought not to divide until they had a little clearer information on the subject. The Secretary for the Colonies could not have read the passages to which he was referring. Once they formed an association and it was approved by the Education Department, the position was this. The Education Department could not give a single penny piece to anybody. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] He was quite sure that hon. Members did not understand this. [*Laughter.*] The words were very clear, "the shares so allotted to each association shall be distributed as aforesaid by the Education Department after they have consulted the governing body," and in accordance with their scheme they could not give a shilling piece themselves or decide to whom it was to go. The association, and that only, would decide how it was to be distributed, and the Education Department handed it over to the association decided upon. On these points the Committee ought to be enlightened from the Treasury Bench before the Division took place.

Question put, "That the words 'if associations of schools are constituted' stand part of the Clause."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 279; Noes, 116.—(Division List, No. 88.)

And it being Midnight, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report progress; to sit again To-morrow.

MOTION.

KINGSTOWN HARBOUR ROADS TRANSFER.

Bill to transfer to the Commissioners of the township of Kingstown certain Roads and Lands now vested in the Commissioners of Kingstown Harbour; and for other purposes, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Hanbury and Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer; presented, and Read the First time; to be Read a Second time upon Thursday, and to be printed.—[Bill 156.]

MERCHANDISE MARKS ACT, 1887.

The Select Committee on the Merchandise Marks Act, 1887, was nominated of—Mr. Cayzer, Sir James Fergusson, Mr. Howard, Major Jameson, Mr. William Jones, Mr. Legh, Mr. McGhee, Mr. Mildmay, Mr. Mundella, Mr. Charles Murray, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Spencer, Sir Howard Vincent, Mr. Charles Wilson, and Mr. John Wilson (Govan).

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.—(*Sir Albert Rollit.*)

HIGHWAYS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday.

TENANT RIGHT IN TOWNS (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

MARRIED PERSONS' SMALL INDUSTRIAL INCOMES (TAX RELIEF) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday next.

COUNTY COUNCILS (QUALIFICATION OF WOMEN) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday, 18th March.

LICENCES (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday.

MILITARY WORKS (MONEY) BILL.

Committee deferred till Thursday.

LAW OF EVIDENCE (CRIMINAL CASES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

TRUSTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Consideration, as amended, deferred till Thursday.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ALDERSHOT AND FARNBOROUGH) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

POOR LAW OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION ACT (1896) AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

JURIES DETENTION BILL.

Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; Bill read the Third time, and passed.

CRETE.

On the question, "That this House do now adjourn,"

*SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT, who was received with Opposition cheers, said: Earlier in the evening I thought it might not be convenient at that time to press Her Majesty's Government to give answers to questions which I am quite sure excite the deepest interest in this House and in the country. ["Hear, hear!"] The object which I had in addressing a question to the right hon. Gentleman will be most clearly explained by reading the form of that question which I proposed to put to the right hon. Gentleman this afternoon. It is this:—

> "We have no desire to embarrass the Government in the negotiations which must necessarily arise upon the reply of the Greek Government to the Note of the Powers; and we feel confident that the efforts of Her Majesty's Government will be directed to bringing about an amicable settlement of the questions at issue between the Powers and Greece. At the same time we desire an assurance from Her Majesty's Government that the forces of the British Crown shall not be employed against Greece before an opportunity has been given to Parliament of expressing its judgment thereon."

[*Cheers.*] In that passage is contained practically what I desire to say. We hope and we believe that in the present situation of things there has arisen a position in which an amicable settlement will be arrived at, and which Her Majesty's Government, I am quite sure, will use their best efforts to bring about. ["Hear, hear!"] But if those efforts should fail, and if any situation should arise in which it should be contemplated by the Powers to use military and naval force against Greece, what we request and what we desire is that before the forces of the British Crown are employed for that purpose, the policy of the Government and the reasons they have to allege in support of it shall be laid before Parliament, and that Parliament shall have an opportunity of pronouncing upon that policy. ["Hear, hear!"] Reference was made in the earlier part of the evening to the situation which the Government of France occupies with regard to this question. It is known from the information received this morning that the Government of France has given an undertaking that no procedure of this kind shall be taken by the French forces against Greece without giving an opportunity to the French Chamber of pronouncing its judgment upon it. I do not put this question upon a claim of constitutional right. In that respect no doubt the Government of Great Britain stands in a different position from that of the Government of France. [*Ministerial cheers.*] But the appeal I make to the right hon. Gentleman is one not founded upon a claim of right, but upon a claim of policy of the highest description. The Government cannot but be aware of the deep feeling that exists in this nation against the prospect of the forces of the Crown being employed in a hostile manner against Greece. ["Hear, hear!"] It is only fair, it is only just, to the country and to the House of Commons that they should have an opportunity of pronouncing their opinion upon such a procedure. I cannot believe that Her Majesty's Government should desire to avoid bringing before the House of Commons such a question as that. They possess a great majority, which will certainly be disposed to support them in any policy which they may adopt, for reasons which shall appear to them to be adequate. On the other hand, it is not in matters of such supreme importance as this that a Government with a majority should refuse to the House of Commons, and the minority, it may be, the right to have a voice in so critical and so dangerous a question as this. Therefore, Sir, what will be the position of the Government if they think they have with them the voice of Parliament? Of course it will strengthen them in their course, and they will have no right to complain. On the other hand, we who are a minority have the right to discuss and to pronounce, though it may be with the voice of the minority, on a question which actually involves the issues of peace and of war. Therefore, I think that the demand we are making upon the Government that before they enter upon this path—and I am not going to discuss the merits of the question to-night at all—this country shall not be placed in a worse position than the nation of France—that the voice of both sides upon such an issue as that shall be heard; and, therefore, what I have to ask the right hon. Gentleman is, that before the determination is taken to use the forces of the British Crown against the Greeks and against Crete, that, at all events, in the House of Commons the reasons for such a proceeding may be stated, and that we on our part may be allowed our voice upon such an issue.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: I desire, in the first place, to thank the right hon. Gentleman for having sent me a copy of the statement which he began by reading to the House on the present occasion, embodying the general tenour of the demand which he was going to make upon me at the rising of the House. And, Sir, let me say that the right hon. Gentleman does us no more than justice when he tells us that he and his colleagues recognise the desire which Her Majesty's Government have of bringing about an amicable settlement. But when the right hon. Gentleman goes further and asks us to give a pledge that no steps shall be taken in the East of Europe of an executive character in connection with the recent Notes delivered to Greece and Turkey without previous consultation with Parliament, I have to say that in our opinion that would not only be extremely inexpedient—[*Ministerial cheers*]—but it would be absolutely contrary to precedent, which, so far as I know, is universal, and which beyond all question is of general weight. The right hon. Gentleman has told us he has read in the newspapers that a pledge very much like that which he has asked from us has been given by the French Government to the French Assembly. I am not sure whether the right hon. Gentleman has rightly interpreted the exact character of the pledge given by the French Ministry, but in any case, whether he be right or whether he be wrong, we must be, and we ought to be, guided by our own constitutional practice. ["Hear, hear!"] Nor do I think it is our business to go to foreign countries to learn the practice which ought to regulate the conduct of a free people. [*Cheers.*] Nor do I at all wish to deal with the question of precedent; but the only two precedents at all analogous to anything which even the most pessimistic imagination can suppose as likely to occur in Eastern waters are the precedents of the bombardment of Alexandria and the blockade of Greece. The bombardment of Alexandria took place, I think, in 1882, and the blockade of Greece took place in 1886. In both cases I think the right hon. Gentleman was a Member of the Government—[*cheers*]—and in both cases I have no doubt the Government of which he was a Member acted with perfect propriety; but I cannot believe that anything stronger—I hope that nothing nearly as strong—is likely to occur at the present crisis—["hear, hear!"]—and certainly profound would be the disappointment of Her Majesty's Government if events of this character were to take place. But in neither of the cases I have mentioned was any notice given to Parliament before the event took place, nor, as far as I am aware, was any Debate permitted by the Executive of the day either on the one subject or the other until after the event had taken place. ["Hear, hear!"] But I do not wish really to dwell upon the question of particular precedents; I wish simply to confine myself to the statement why Her Majesty's Government are most anxiously desirous of an amicable settlement. They cannot so far violate the ordinary traditions which have governed the Executive in this country for unnumbered generations as to pledge themselves in a matter of this kind to take no steps whatever in Eastern waters in connection with this crisis, which may lead to action by force, without previously consulting this House. Everything the Government does is done with a consciousness that they are responsible to Parliament and the country. ["Hear, hear!"] If Parliament and the country disapprove of what they have done the remedy is in their own hands; and if it be a punishment to be turned out of office—["hear, hear!" *and a laugh*]—that punishment will undoubtedly fall on our heads if in this or in any other great national issue we run counter to the national will. [*Cheers.*] But beyond that it is impossible for us to go. Pledges inconsistent with that it is impossible for us to give. ["Hear, hear!"] We are acting under the firm belief that the policy we are pursuing is a policy of liberty in Crete and peace in Europe. [*Cheers.*] And neither liberty in Crete nor peace in Europe are we prepared to imperil by entering into a pledge which may hamper our freedom of action, it may be, at a critical moment. [*Loud cheers.*]

First Lord of the Treasury.

*Sir C. DILKE: There were two pledges given, as I understand, in the French Parliament, and also in the Italian Parliament; certainly in the French Parliament. The second pledge was by the French Prime Minister yesterday, that either to-morrow or on Thursday he would state to the Assembly what steps were agreed upon by the Powers with a view to future action, so that they might have an opportunity of discussion. I wish to ask whether the right hon. Gentleman believes that either to-morrow or on Thursday he will be able to make a similar statement as to the intention of the Powers to that which has certainly been promised in France.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: I frankly admit there ought to be communication between the Great Powers upon the subject of the answer of Greece to the message of the Powers, but I cannot believe that the negotiations will be terminated either by Wednesday or Thursday.

LICENSING EXEMPTION (HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

House adjourned at Hal
after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, March 10th 1897.

DIVORCE BILLS.

Ordered, That the Select Committee on Divorce Bills do consist of the following members:—Mr. Attorney General, Mr. Atkinson, Mr. John Blair Balfour, Mr. Hemphill, Sir Frank Lockwood, The Lord Advocate, Sir Robert Reid, Mr. Solicitor General, and Mr. Wodehouse.—(*Sir William Walrond.*)

Ordered, That a Message be sent to the Lords to request that their Lordships will be pleased to communicate to this House Copies of the Minutes of Evidence and Proceedings, together with the Documents deposited in the case of Thompson's Divorce Bill [*Lords*].—(*Sir William Walrond.*)

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Select Committee on Divorce Bills that they do hear Counsel and examine Witnesses for Thompson's Divorce Bill [*Lords*], and also that they do hear Counsel and examine Witnesses against the Bill, if the parties concerned think fit to be heard by Counsel and produce Witnesses.—(*Sir William Walrond.*)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS BILL.

Considered in Committee.

[The Chairman of Ways and Means, Mr. J. W. Lowther, in the Chair.]

[Progress, 9th March.—Seventh Day.]

Clause 1,—

AID GRANT TO VOLUNTARY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

(1) For aiding Voluntary Schools there shall be annually paid out of moneys provided by Parliament an aid grant, not exceeding in the aggregate 5s. per scholar for the whole number of scholars in those schools.

(2) The aid grant shall be distributed by the Education Department to such Voluntary Schools and in such manner and amounts as the Department think best for the purpose of helping necessitous schools and increasing their efficiency, due regard being had to the maintenance of voluntary subscriptions.

(3) If associations of schools are constituted in such manner in such areas and with such governing bodies representative of the managers as are approved by the Education Department, there shall be allotted to each association while so approved,

(*a*) a share of the aid grant to be computed according to the number of scholars in the schools of the association at the rate of 5s. per scholar, or, if the Department fix different rates for town and country schools respectively (which they are hereby empowered to do) then at those rates; and

(*b*) a corresponding share of any sum which may be available out of the aid grant after distribution has been made to unassociated schools.

(4) The share so allotted to each such association shall be distributed as aforesaid by the Education Department after consulting the governing body of the association, and in accordance with any scheme prepared by that body which the Department for the time being approve.

(5) The Education Department may exclude a school from any share of the aid grant which it might otherwise receive, if, in the opinion of the Department it unreasonably refuses or fails to join such an association, but the refusal or failure shall not be deemed unreasonable if the majority of the schools in the association belong to a religious denomination to which the school in question does not itself belong.

(6) The Education Department may require as a condition of a school receiving a share of the aid grant, that accounts of the receipts and expenditure of the school shall be annually audited in accordance with the regulations of the Department.

(7) The decision of the Education Department upon any question relating to the distribution or allotment of the aid grant, including the question whether an association is or is not in conformity with this Act, and whether a school is a town or a country school, shall be final.

Mr. ELLIS GRIFFITH (Anglesey) moved in Sub-section (3), after the word "constituted" to insert the words "in accordance with the regulations hereinafter laid down." His object, he explained, was to induce the Government to give the Committee some further information as to the way in which these associations were to be formed. Under the Bill as presented there was no information of any kind, and this was the view taken by *The Times*, which, in a leading article of the 12th February, said:—

> "Mr. Balfour denied the accuracy of this construction" (the construction that the machinery of the Bill was new and arbitrary), "but there is certainly nothing in the Bill to show how the associations of schools are to come into existence. They are simply referred to as if they were well known institutions which are to be called into play by a mere enabling clause."

It was upon the line of that criticism that he begged to move his Amendment, in order to give an opportunity for those in charge of the Bill to say what they meant by these associations. The subsection said they were to be constituted in every such area as the Education Department might think fit. He did not think the House of Commons ought to delegate those duties to an Education Department already so heavily worked that the Vice President of the Council himself was not able to spare any time to give them an explanation about the Bill, and he did not think it fair to oppress the right hon. Gentleman further with the laborious duties this Bill threw upon his shoulders. What were the areas? Was not that so important a point that the House of Commons was entitled to some further information upon it? They were completely in the dark as to what was the area ultimately to be adopted by the Government, through the Education Department. He believed there were, at any rate, two civil areas suggested. The Vice President of the Council, on one of the few occasions upon which he enlightened the House, suggested that the area should be coterminous with a million population. That would include about six hundred Voluntary Schools, on an average, which, he submitted, was rather too numerous a body to come within the purview of one educational association. Again, it had been suggested that the area covered by the different inspectors of these Voluntary Schools should be taken as the basis of an association, which, he thought, was the better suggestion of the two. Of course, Gentlemen in that House connected with the Church Party were not satisfied with a civil, but wanted an ecclesiastical, area, and he believed there was some struggle between the Bishops and Archdeacons on the point. The question of area was more important from the point of view of a subject which would come later on—namely, the reference to town and country which was contained in the Bill. It was there proposed to differentiate between town and country in favour of the town, so that they might give one association more because it included in its area more town and less country, and give another less because it included more country and less town. They were, therefore, entitled to some explanation on the point. Who were to be represented on these associations? He was aware it would be out of order to suggest that any fresh duties should be thrown upon any statutory body, therefore, he assumed it would be out of order on the part of any hon. Member to move an Amendment casting duties of this kind upon the County Council, but there was no reason why the Government itself should not allow the County Council that had jurisdiction within an association area to be represented upon the association. One merit of the Bill of last year was that it recognised that the County Council had something to do with this, and he would suggest that the County Council was not less able to have a voice felt on the association than it was in the Bill of last year to be a County governing body. If the Government resisted this Amendment, he would ask them to give some assurance that they would, at any rate, see that the Education Department would take steps to provide for a representation of the teachers themselves upon the associations. His own fear was that these associations would become clerical bodies. Clerical bodies did not care for education as such. They cared for their own particular creed, therefore, it was necessary to leaven these clerical associations with some element that cared for education, and teachers of elementary schools were most interested in promoting education, and in seeing that it was properly carried on in the schools. He also submitted that the Education Department ought to be directly represented upon the associations. Upon the governing bodies of University Colleges in receipt of Government money the Government itself directly appointed some one to represent it. If the Education Department were directly represented upon the different associations they could select men who lived within the area of the association, who knew something of the necessities of the district, who would look generally after the interests of education, and who would counterbalance somewhat the strictly clerical element of the associations, and enable them the more properly to do their work. Again, he would urge that, as these associations were to be practically of a compulsory character, every school within the area should be directly represented upon the association itself, otherwise, he thought, the chance of a school unrepresented obtaining the 5s. grant would be less than that of a school powerfully and directly represented upon the association. He thought the Church schools would join the association, but what became of the Roman Catholic, the Wesleyan, and other schools? Were they to be taken all over the country, or was there one portion of the country to be taken as a definite area, within which all the schools must join in the association? He had standing in his name at a later stage the regulations which he submitted ought to be accepted by the Government, in which he suggested that the managers of Voluntary Schools within the area should elect one half of the governing body of the association, one quarter should be represented by the Education Department, the other quarter to be teachers of schools in the association area. He begged to move the Amendment.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.) said the actual words of the Amendment dealt with unknown and unspecified regulations to be hereinafter laid down. The hon. Member had naturally indicated the kind of regulations which, under these general words, he wished to introduce at a later stage; but he (the First Lord of the Treasury) thought they had better wait until these proposals were before them before they attempted to discuss their merits. It appeared to him that nothing would be gained by introducing these words, because there was nothing to prevent either the hon. Member or his Friends making specific proposals which they thought would improve the Bill. He would not, therefore, deal with the question of area or the constitution of the governing body, because on both these topics he feared he would have a good deal to say before these proceedings came to an end.

MR. A. H. DYKE ACLAND (Yorks, W.R., Rotherham) pointed out that most Bills of this kind affecting local authorities contained provisions regarding them which were not inserted in detail in the body of the Bill. He considered the hon. Member for Anglesey had moved a very useful Amendment on which he hoped the First Lord of the Treasury would have been able to tell the Committee something as to the various matters dealt with in accordance with promises given. When the Opposition raised points as to the extraordinary nebulousness of the associations which the supporters and opponents of the Bill alike felt, on the proposal to give equal grants to schools all round, coupled with the voluntary associations which they desired, the right hon. Gentleman advised them to postpone the point as it would be raised later on. Now, when they suggested that he might inform them, upon matters in which they were absolutely in the dark, he suggested that they should put it off again. Information upon the views of the Government as to these associations was desired for their guidance by many supporters of the Government in the country. There it was difficult for local bodies to follow the details of a Bill which was passing rapidly—[*Ministerial laughter and cries of* "Oh!"]—through the House. Well, *The Times* that morning said that on the whole the progress made with the Bill had been favourable. If the Committee compared the progress of the Bill with that of the "non-contentious" Parish Councils Bill it would be found that, on the whole, the present Opposition could not be accused of obstruction. The Canterbury Diocesan Board of Education a little while ago considered the Bill. Of course, they generally approved of it; but when they came to the distribution clauses they said:—

> "This Board is unable to express any opinion on the distribution clauses of the Bill in the absence of any sufficient details as to the principles upon which the distribution is to be effected."

[*Cheers.*] The Canterbury Diocesan Board of Education was in the same position that they were in this House. It had been said that no clause could be found in any Act of Parliament which was so utterly vague. Then there were extremely varied views as to the functions of the associations. The Colonial

Secretary said they would be merely advisory. But the First Lord of the Treasury, on the First Reading of the Bill, did not say their functions would be merely advisory. He said they would be able to give not merely pecuniary assistance but assistance in many other ways. What were the "many other ways?" That was one of the things the Opposition desired to know. Last night the First Lord of the Treasury said his hopes as regarded the Bill were staked more on the associations than on the money. The Leader of the House, who was finally responsible for the Bill, had staked his reputation upon it.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Oh, no. [*Laughter*].

MR. ACLAND said he was under the impression that at an early stage of the Bill the right hon. Gentleman said he would drop the Bill if popular representation on the governing bodies of the schools were insisted on. [*Ministerial cries of* "No!"] At all events, he said the associations were of primary importance to the Bill. So he expected the right hon. Gentleman would have given the Committee clear information as to what the associations were. Again and again the leading organs of the Government in the Press had asked for more information about them. *The Times* had over and over again asked for it, and only that morning said that a thorough investigation with regard to the proposed associations was required. The Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education had considered the Bill, and the opinion and advice of such bodies on a Bill of this kind was of considerable importance. The Board had passed a Resolution to the effect that, while recognising the extreme value of the principle of association of elementary schools, they thought the proper distribution of the aid grant and the efficiency of education would be more likely to be promoted if the governing bodies of representative managers named in the Bill were modified by the addition of representatives of the local civil authorities and educational experts, the whole being representative of a defined area. An opinion of that sort was certainly not to be despised, and ought to be considered. The question of representation was extremely important, because the associations were not, in the ordinary sense of the word, voluntary. No one could get over that. The composition of the governing body was of the very highest importance. Were they to be practically a clerical body, or were provisions to be laid down that a strong lay element should exist? There was nothing in the Bill which implied any definite or certain element in these Associations. Did the Government intend to follow the advice of some of their wisest counsellors and introduce a strong lay element? By that means there would be representation of popular bodies, and some strength might be introduced into the Associations. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. ERNEST GRAY (West Ham, N.) expressed his very great regret that the details of the Associations were not more clearly outlined in the Bill. He felt constrained to support the Amendment. These Associations might be beneficial, but he looked forward to them with grave apprehension, as he was fearful that they might give rise to a large amount of local jealousy and irritation. These Associations would actually be making suggestions to the Department as to the distribution of money amongst themselves; in other words, every man upon them would have a direct interest in the money being distributed. ["Hear, hear!"] He had always understood that persons supposed to have a personal interest were forbidden to take any part in the distribution of the funds. He thought the apprehensions of some of the most prominent supporters of the Church and of the Voluntary Schools would be removed if in the Bill some indication were given as to the areas, constitution, and duties of these new educational authorities. [*Opposition cheers.*] It was a little difficult to discuss the constitution of a body without knowing the area from which that body was to be drawn. They had only had one smal piece of information during the Debat as to the area or constitution, and tha was in the exceedingly interesting an able speech made by the Vice Presiden of the Council. [*Ironical Oppositio cheers.*] In that speech he referred t an Association area covering a populatio of one million persons. He had bee working that out to see what the consti tution of the Association would be, an he was alarmed at the proportions whic it would assume. The First Lord of th

Treasury, earlier in the progress of the Bill, had stated that one of the benefits he looked forward to in regard to the Associations would be that the bad manager would come into contact with men of wider capacity and more business-like habits. He ventured to submit that those were just the very men who would not be elected on the Boards of the Associations if anything like a wide area were covered. He looked forward to the time when there should be County Boards of Education both for primary and secondary education. As to the areas, he thought those of the inspectors' districts would be of most advantage. He regretted that some statement had not been made as to the line of action which would be adopted. Taking a population of a million, 490 schools would be the number of schools covered by the Association, and such an area might cover the counties of Cornwall and Devon. How could any one Board sitting at Plymouth determine what would be the necessities of a school in the north of Devon and a school in the south-west of Cornwall? He believed the Associations when the Bill passed would have to appoint inspectors to collect and tabulate evidence as to the necessities of the different schools, and for the large staff which would be necessary for this purpose the voluntary subscriptions would be "sweated." Perhaps the Government had determined to press the Bill through Committee without the adoption of any Amendment whatever—[*Opposition cheers*]—and he could easily conceive that they might reasonably have come to such a determination, having regard to the series of Amendments which had been moved. He regretted that the discussion had not been limited to what were, in his opinion, *bonâ fide* Amendments—[*Ministerial cheers*]—rather than to Amendments which were designed, not to amend, but to destroy, the Bill. If it were impossible to insert Amendments at this stage as to the areas, composition, and duties of the new Associations, he hoped at a future stage they would receive a clear statement on the subject. The opinions he had expressed were the opinions of the rank and file of the Conservative Party; and, as he desired to see the Bill passed in a form which would make it most profitable to the Voluntary Schools, he hoped the Government would pay attention to those opinions.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Monmouthshire, W.): I waited for an instant to see whether it were possible that the Government really intended to make no reply to the appeals made to them in the two speeches which have just been addressed to the Committee from both sides of the House, by Members of the greatest experience in educational questions. They have been asked to state whether they are disposed, or not disposed, before the Bill leaves the Committee, to give some information on the subject of their views in reference to these voluntary associations. This Amendment merely states that there shall be in the Bill some further definition of the conditions upon which these voluntary associations are to be founded. I do not know whether it is that the First Lord of the Treasury is so enamoured of this infant upon whom, as he told us the other night, his future depends——

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I never said anything of the kind. [*Laughter.*]

SIR W. HARCOURT: Well, there was an eloquent passage that went to my heart—[*laughter*]—in which the right hon. Gentleman said he was prepared to brave the storm that would be aroused over the failure of this plan of associations. But then it is the way of great men to prefer always their inferior work. [*Laughter.*] It is said that Milton thought "Paradise Lost" was his greatest production. [*Cries of* "Paradise Regained," *and laughter.*] Yes, "Paradise Regained." I am sorry for the slip. Whether these voluntary associations will be the "Paradise Regained" of the First Lord of the Treasury, or whether in the future his reputation will depend on the "Paradise Lost" of the voluntary associations, I am not able to say. [*Laughter.*] But if the First Lord is not aware that there is very great doubt and anxiety as to the sagacity of this scheme, surely the speech he has just heard from his own side must enlighten him on the subject; and besides numerous articles have appeared in newspapers which are ranked among his supporters entreating him to reconsider the scheme. The only gleam of light which we have had as to the basis upon which these associations are to formed is the statement of the Vice President of the Council that they were to be founded on the basis of a million population. That, the Mover of the Amendment stated, would involve 600 schools. Then 600 gentlemen are to meet to distribute this money. My right hon. Friend the late Vice President of the Council asked whether there was to be any lay element in these associations; and some Member on the other side approved of the suggestion. But the First Lord did not state, and he evidently is not prepared to state that even amongst these 600 persons there shall be any laymen at all. ["Hear, hear!"] What we are asking for now is that we should have some light upon the question as to how these bodies are to be constituted. It is said they are to be constituted as approved by the Education Department. [*Ministerial cries of* "Hear, hear!"] Yes, but what are to be the general principles upon which the Education Department is to approve of these associations? That is exactly what the representative of the Education Department in this House has not been allowed to tell us; and everything depends upon that. [*Cheers.*] But if the Vice President of the Committee of the Council is not allowed to give to the House or to the country any indication whatever of the lines upon which these associations are to be administered and constituted, at all events we have got here a responsible Minister and a Member of the Committee of the Council in the First Lord of the Admiralty. [*Laughter.*] When we asked the Vice President whom that Council consisted of he mentioned with great emphasis the First Lord of the Admiralty as one of the principal lights of that body—[*laughter*]—and if the Vice President is not to have a voice in the determination of this matter no more than he has a voice in this House—[*laughter*]—perhaps the more distinguished members of the Committee of the Council, such as the First Lord of the Admiralty and Secretary of State for War—[*laughter*]—might give us some indication of what is intended in this matter. Surely the right hon. Gentleman does not expect—does not think it fair to expect—that the House is going to pass this Bill without any further information on the subject than has been already given.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: "Hear, hear!"

SIR W. HARCOURT: But that is exactly what is asked for in the Amendment. [*Cheers.*]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I have already stated that the speech of the Mover of the Amendment, if not the Amendment itself, covered two points—the question of area and the question of constitution. On both of these points there are Amendments on the Paper; and that to deal with those points now, however desirable, would be to anticipate discussion.

SIR W. HARCOURT: But all this Amendment asks is that there should be some definition. But we know now what the policy of the Government is in regard to the Bill. The Government are determined that no Amendment is to be admitted into the Bill, for the express purpose of preventing discussion on a future stage. [*Cheers.*] And what is it that we complain of? We complain that from the first it has been determined that there shall be no discussion and no Amendment of this Bill; and that every method is to be employed to prevent that discussion and that Amendment. [*Cheers.*] I cannot but think that this refusal of the Government to give information on this material question is neither fair nor just to the country. [*Cheers.*] If the Government are determined to pursue that course, we can only protest. They will in vain say that they have allowed, on this great question of education, that freedom of discussion in this House which it ought to receive. Certainly the Measure will not go forth to the country with that sanction which a Measure of importance that has been properly discussed ought to go forth to the country. [*Cheers.*] Our views are in vain against the great battalions opposite. I have never known these great battalions to be employed in the manner in which they have been employed by the Government throughout this Bill, and especially in connection with this point of the school associations, despite the appeals which have been made to the Government from their own side of the House as well as from the ranks of their opponents. [*Cheers.*]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I am not going to be led by the right hon. Gentleman into a discussion of the methods by which this Bill has been conducted. When the right hon. Gentleman tells the astonished Committee that there has not been full and free discussion upon the Measure, I confess that if his idea of full and free discussion is not satisfied by the time we have spent in passing ten lines, I do not know how he proposes that legislation should pass through this House at all. [*Cheers.*] I do not remember any case in my Parliamentary experience in which so much time has been taken as over the discussion, very often—if I may speak my full opinion—of very frivolous Amendments to the first few lines of the Bill. [*Cheers; and cries of* "The Home Rule Bill" *from the Opposition Benches.*] The discussion on the first clause of the Home Rule Bill was a protracted discussion: but I do not believe it was nearly as protracted as this discussion. [*Cheers.*] Let it be remembered that in the Debates which we have had, by the very admission of hon. Gentlemen opposite, we have not yet reached the most critical part of the clause; for the matter on which they must feel most keenly is the question of the associations. The Government have no desire to conceal their views; but the sole point is, ought we to discuss this question on this Amendment or on specific Amendments raising the different points? [*Cheers.*] It is a matter of convenience, and I should have thought that the latter course was the more convenient. The right hon. Gentleman seems, too, to have forgotten that it has been ruled by the Chair that the words of the hon. Member for Anglesey are to be read in connection with a later Amendment of his, and are to be debated in connection with that. Now, that later Amendment does not raise the general question of the associations; and I should, therefore, be out of order if I were to attempt to respond to the invitation of the right hon. Gentleman. As to his statement that it is the settled policy of the Government that no Amendment shall be adopted, I would say that it is the settled policy of the Government that no Amendment shall be adopted which will not improve the Bill. [*Cheers.*] But if anything which, in our judgment, would improve the Bill, be suggested from either side of the House, of course it will be adopted. I have known Measures in which changes were introduced by the Government, not because they thought the changes would improve the Bill, but to conciliate the Opposition and make the Debates run more smoothly. But those Bills were met by the Opposition in a very different spirit and manner; and it must be perfectly obvious to anyone that Amendments which are not improvements to the Bill, and which are simply brought forward to smooth the passage of the Bill, would not in this case have that effect, and ought not in this case to be adopted. [*Cheers.*]

Mr. H. H. ASQUITH (Fife, E.): I will not now enter upon the question whether the conduct of the Opposition or of the Government does involve a departure from Parliamentary precedent; but when we come to the question whether the clause stand part of the Bill—or if at a subsequent stage we are able to debate the Bill as a whole—many of us will feel it our duty to call the attention of the House and of the country to the fact that in relation to a Measure of first-class importance an absolutely new departure has been taken. [*Cheers.*] I must point out to the right hon. Gentleman that he has not even attempted to meet the point put by the Leader of the Opposition. The right hon. Gentleman says that when we come to a subsequent Amendment we can discuss the constitution and the areas of these associations. But that is not the question. The question is: Are the Government prepared to introduce into the Bill, at any time and in any shape, words which will secure that the constitution of these associations shall be a matter of statutory definition—[*cheers*]—that the conditions under which they exist shall be prescribed by Parliament, and not left to the fluctuating caprice of a Government Department? [*Cheers.*] As between the authorised version of the intentions of the Government, and the unauthorised version given last night by the Colonial Secretary, I prefer the former. We know that you are going to attempt to introduce a novel experiment into our educational system; that it is intended that, to a very large although to an undefined extent, the discretion of the Education Department shall be governed by the recommendations of the associations. That being so, we are entitled to insist that at some stage or other—and this seems to be the most convenient stage—we should preserve to Parliament the power of prescribing, by fitting language in the Bill, what is to be the constitution and what are to be the areas of these new bodies. The right hon. Gentleman says that he will accept Amendments which are improvements to the Bill. But is he, or is he not, prepared to lay down that in a matter of such vital importance as this all control is to be withdrawn from the House of Commons and that we are to be left absolutely at the discretion of the Department? [*Cheers.*] There are two ways in which the principle of statutory control might be carried into effect. You might prescribe, either in the section itself or in a schedule, the conditions under which these associations are to be constituted and carried out. There is another method—namely, that the Education Department should, from time to time, lay upon the Table of the House the schemes by which these associations are constituted. We are prepared to adopt whichever method the Government think most convenient; but we assert that you ought not to hand over these large powers to bodies whose constitution is indefinite, and as to whose conditions of action no pledges which the right hon. Gentleman can give can possibly bind the future. [*Cheers.*]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: May I point out that on this Amendment the question is not raised? Supposing the Amendment be rejected, as I hope it will be, it will still be as open to the Committee as before to lay down Parliamentary conditions with regard to the associations, either by the methods suggested by the right hon. Gentleman, or by the methods suggested by various other ingenious persons who have put down Amendments. [*Laughter.*] If he asks me whether I think there ought to be Parliamentary regulations in this matter, I say I have not been able to think of any Parliamentary regulations—[*ironical cheers*]—which would not be deleterious to the object in view. [*Ironical cheers.*] I am quite ready to listen to suggestions and to argue them—[*Opposition laughter*]—and if suggestions are made which ought to be introduced into the Bill, of course they will be.

CAPTAIN BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) said that the right hon. Member for Fife talked about a new departure. It was undoubtedly true that, since the Parliament which sat in 1892, a wise spirit of conciliation and compromise had left the House, and the sooner it came back the better. ["Hear, hear!"] He himself entirely disagreed with the view of the right hon. Member for Fife, and he favoured the plan of the Government. All were agreed that there must be some local authority to assist in the distribution of this money. He thought it was much better that these authorities should be as various and as suitable to local circumstances as possible. [*Cheers.*] The only way to obtain that was, while making the formation of associations compulsory, to leave their form voluntary. The Committee had wisely rejected the proposal that the administration should be left entirely in the hands of the Education Department. He was bound to say that he objected to the Bill because it gave more power than it ought to the Education Department; but he preferred the proposals of the Government in respect to these associations, because, to some extent, they modified that power. ["Hear, hear!"] He was always in favour—even at the expense of efficiency—of giving the power to local authorities to manage local affairs; and he was always opposed to giving further powers to the Government State Departments. [*Cheers.*] That was a bad and detestable form of government. He thought it would be impossible to insert in the Bill any general rule by which the associations could be formed. It would be much better to leave them to the voluntary section of the localities than to insert rules which could only end in creating inelastic bodies unsuited to the localities. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. E. H. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) regretted that the Government had not responded to the appeal which had been made to them. This was the most important part of the Bill, and when the Government were pressed for information they always put the question off to a later stage. An hon. Gentleman had said that a deputation of teachers had waited on him, and had expressed the greatest apprehension as to these associations; but that, after hearing his explanations they went away perfectly satisfied. That was quite likely; for the Bill supplied as far as the associations were concerned, a mere outline, and it was quite open to any Gentleman to fill up the details according to his own wishes. In the country there was considerable misapprehension and misgiving in regard to these associations, and in particular, fear was entertained that the associations would be too largely ecclesiastical in their composition. That was a fear which was not limited to Dissenters, but was shared by influential Churchmen, such as the Bishop of Hereford and Canon Barker. He looked at the Bill from a metropolitan point of view, and he would call attention to one point. The London Diocesan Board of Education had an executive Poor Schools Relief Fund Committee, which was composed of four laymen and 19 clergymen. He contended that, unless they took some absolute security in the Bill itself for the due representation of the lay element on the associations, the solid interests of education would be sacrificed to sectarian zeal, perhaps he should say to sectarian bigotry.

MR. R. W. PERKS (Lincolnshire, Louth) stated that he had received from an influential body in that county, the Church of England Diocesan Committee, a resolution very strongly urging the Poor Law Union as the most satisfactory form of area. That area was already recognised in the Education Statutes in connection with the appointment of attendance officers.

MR. GEORGE LAMBERT (Devon, South Molton) declared that it was a gross fallacy of language to call the associations a local authority. Those associations were composed of absolutely irresponsible persons. They were responsible to no body of electors, and he did not know whom they were responsible to. Formerly, the First Lord of the Treasury spoke of the 5s. grant as of the greatest importance to the Voluntary Schools, but now, it appeared it was not the money so much as the associations which were so important. The Amendment was a very reasonable and right one. Not only influential Churchmen, whose names had been mentioned, but the Wesleyan body and the National Teachers' Union were strongly opposed to the associations part of the Bill. It would, therefore, be consonant with the views of a large number of people to accept the Amendment, so that the proposed associations could be so amended as to inspire confidence in the country.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: That can be done without the words.

MR. LAMBERT said the right hon. Gentleman would give the House no indication in what way he would amend the Bill. If the schools were to be compulsorily federated he could not but think that mischief would ensue.

*MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Nottingham, Mansfield) feared that if the Amendment were rejected, they would be told from the Chair that the principle had been decided, and they would be bound rigorously to confine themselves to the particular Amendment. If the First Lord of the Treasury would accept the principle of the Amendment he would cheerfully accept his advice, but he had done nothing of the kind. On the contrary, his reasoning showed that he had not an open mind on the subject. This discussion had raised a very serious question, and suggested some great difficulties. There was one general reason why the Amendment should be adopted. It was that the method proposed by the Bill was a thoroughly unconstitutional one. The regulations which would be framed in accordance with the Bill would be in the nature, and would have all the effect, of an Act of Parliament. They would constitute a document of far greater importance than many statutes which had received the sanction of Parliament. The Department would be called upon to do what he submitted ought to be done by the House. The proposal of the Government effaced Parliament, or reduced it to absolute impotence. The Government was in fact deliberately shirking a most difficult question.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) pointed out that, regulations or no regulations, the associations were to be approved by the Education Department; if not so approved, they fell to the ground with regard to their right to this part of the grant. The House had confirmed in Sub-section (2) the general principle that the Department should have uncontrolled power, and the remaining five Sub-sections were simply limitations of what the House had already done. Though he acknowledged that a dangerous power was given to the Department, he did not think it would be possible for

Parliament to lay down the regulations. He looked with considerable misgiving on the proposal contained in this section of the Bill, first of all giving the Department absolute uncontrolled power in the disposition of funds, and then affecting to control the Department by the creation of associations which the same Department had to approve.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) asked for some information as to what should be the constitution and area of the associations. The Leader of the House had been urged to allow some control over the Department itself as well as some ultimate control over the associations. Unless Parliament and the country had some means whereby they might really be made aware of the lines on which the associations were to be formed, he maintained that the Committee was voting the grant of money entirely in the dark as to what would be the constitution of the bodies to which the distribution was to relegated and the mode in which the money was to be distributed. It was almost impossible for the Committee, until they knew what the areas would be, to discuss the constitution; and, whilst they knew the constitution, to discuss the subject of areas. Was the right hon. Gentleman prepared to give favourable consideration to reasonable Amendments in regard to area and representation?

MR. B. L. COHEN (Islington, E.) said he had certainly no desire to extend clerical influence in the Voluntary Schools. When hon. Gentlemen opposite said that the supporters of the Government did not approach the subject with an open mind, he threw back the reproach and said that it was the Opposition who approached the subject with a closed mind. Why should it be assumed that the associations were to exercise their influence in a narrow-minded, intolerant, selfish way, which was contrary to the practice of all those bodies to whom the administration of the funds would be confided, and contrary to their holy calling?

SIR HENRY FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) said that the clause dealt with the conditions of the formation of the associations, their constitution, the area, and the governing bodies representing managers through whom they were to act. The issue between the two sides of the House was as to whether this constitution was to be left absolutely to the initiative of any body which chose to form an association subject to the approval o the Education Department, or whether Parliament was to have a voice in laying down the regulations under which that constitution was to take place, and subject to which the Education Department was to act. That was a fair proposition which should be looked at from a practical and from a constitutional point o view. There was a tendency on the Treasury Bench at one time to exaggerate the power of the associations and at another time to minimise them. The associations were, in fact, a new mode of local government in this country a new mode of School Boards, and al they were asking for was that some regulations with regard to them should be put into the Bill. They asked the Government to do one of two things—either to put a schedule in the Bill setting out the regulations under which the associations should be formed, which was a simple way and secured the effective control of Parliament, and would enable the Department to proceed on something like uniform lines and with something like practical results; or to say that the Education Department should itself take the initiative, that they should prescribe the rules under which the associations should be formed, and that Parliament should merely have the right to say "Aye" or "No," if they said anything at all, but that Parliament should have that power vested in them. That did not seem to be an unreasonable proposition. They ought to know something of the constitution of the new local authority, which was actually to have the power of distributing this money in the first instance. He was not so sure that this would be a final matter—he was not sure that they would stop at the £600,000. There had been some ominous hints in the course of the Debate that, if the First Lord of the Treasury or the Chancellor of the Exchequer had seen his way to make this grant 10s. instead of 5s., there would have been no opposition on that side of the House. [*Ministerial cheers.*] These associations were the authorities which were to have the control, in the first instance, of upwards of half a million of money. In the course of time they might have a larger control, and the Committee could not shut its eyes to the fact that the First Lord of the Treasury regarded these associations as of enormous value, and that he regarded them, not as a mere banking authority, but as a controlling authority to rectify what was bad and to develop what was good. Having regard to the power and the money the House of Commons was going to place in the hands of these associations in the first instance, and also the possibility, perhaps the probability, of an extension of power and financial control, he thought they had a right to again ask the Government, in their own way if they liked, to provide that Parliament should have some voice in the initiation of these associations. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. SAMUEL EVANS (Glamorgan, Mid) said there was a very strong constitutional reason in favour of this Amendment and against the course of the Government. There had not been a single case in this country yet where they had constituted any authority like a local authority for the spending of money where they had intrusted the constitution of that authority to a Department. Yet they were asking Parliament to give a free hand to the Education Department without any kind of suggestion to the representative of that Department in the House as to what kind of associations might be formed, or as to what the constitution of these bodies would be, and to intrust this matter solely to the Education Department. The Education Department was, according to some of its best supporters on the other side of the House, incompetent to do the work of the distribution of this money. If the Education Department were incompetent to do that, he submitted that they were not called upon to say that the Department was competent to constitute an association. There might be a good deal to be said in favour of not charging the Bill with long regulations for the constitution of these associations if they had any idea at all what kind of associations they wanted, but they had never been told. This Bill would come into operation soon. He wanted to ask the Vice President, who might, and probably would be Vice President at that time, what kind of scheme would he approve for these associations? It seemed to him that in deciding the constitution, apart from the question of representation, of the associations, they must put it under one of three heads—they must say either that the associations were to be topographical associations, or that they were to be based on religious belief and tenets, or that they were to be included in diocesan, or school, or inspectors' areas. Under the first head let him take London. What kind of association would the Vice President expect to be formed in London? Would he constitute an association for North London, an association for the South of London, one for the West of London, and one for the East of London, or would he form one for the whole of London altogether? One was entitled to ask the Department—at any rate if they were to be intrusted with these powers and if they refused to put the regulations into the Bill—what kind of associations they expected to be formed. Was it to be a statutory body? How was it to act? Was it to have a clerk? Where was it to meet? Regulations were made with regard to School Boards, and yet the Government refused to take the same course in regard to these associations.

Several Members of the Opposition rose to continue the Debate, when

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 223; Noes, 109.—(Division List, No. 89.)

Question put accordingly, "That the words 'in such manner' stand part of the Clause."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 232; Noes, 106.—(Division List, No. 90.)

On the return of the CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS, after the usual interval,

*MR. F. A. CHANNING (Northampton, E.), in whose name the following Amendment stood on the Paper—in Subsection (3) to leave out the words "in such areas and," in order to insert the words "in urban or rural sanitary districts"—said that, the words "in such manner" having been inserted in the Bill, he proposed to move after the word "in" to insert "urban and rural sanitary districts." This, he thought, would raise the point he wished to raise.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS said he was afraid the hon. Member could not move the Amendment in that form, because it was an alternative to the next words. The way he would put the Amendment would be to leave out "in such areas."

MR. ACLAND asked whether that would preclude the discussion of alternatives?

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS said that one alternative only to the words of the Bill could be proposed at a time. It would be very inconvenient to discuss half-a-dozen alternatives at the same time. The general rule of the House was that there should be a Motion and an Amendment, and if the Committee pronounced in favour of one, it was obvious that the other was rejected. The proper course was to discuss the question of areas upon the Amendment of the hon. Member, and if the Committee approved of the words in the Bill, no other areas could be suggested.

SIR H. FOWLER said he understood that the question the Chairman proposed to put was that the words "in such areas" stand part of the Bill. He might object to those words, and he might object also to the proposal of the hon. Member. Would he not then be at liberty to say that in his opinion the county was the better area? Would it not be a great limitation of the right of discussion on a most important part of the Bill, if hon. Members were prevented from suggesting areas which they thought preferable to both? An Amendment might actually be proposed in the interests of the Government.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS said he did not mean that the discussion was to be limited in the sense referred to by the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman said that he objected to the words "in such areas," and might equally object to the proposal of the Amendment. The right hon. Gentleman could vote against the words "in such areas," and if they were struck out he could vote against any other words which might be proposed.

SIR H. FOWLER said he wished to be clear that the discussion would not be limited to the words "in such areas."

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: Oh, no; I do not think I said that.

*MR. CHANNING, continuing, said he would state briefly to the Committee the reasons why he suggested that if they laid down any area in the Bill, that area should be the sanitary district. The Committee having assented to the principle of these associations being formed the first object should be to provide that they should be formed on workable lines so that the associations might carry out what had been expressed by the Vice President of the Council as their object. The Vice President of the Committee of Council had dwelt in his speech on this question on the isolation of managers and on the necessity of bringing local pressure to bear upon those whom he described as eccentric individuals. The right hon. Gentleman said, in describing these associations, that when the managers met together united in one common association, individual eccentricities would at least be likely to be suppressed, and that every effort had been made to prevent the loss of what he called local interest, as the managers of various parishes would meet together and come into contact with one another. Those words were the best indication of how these associations were expected to work, but he submitted to the Committee that if they had some immense area such as a diocesan area, the whole of the ideal state of things foreshadowed by the Vice President would be absolutely out of reach. Last year there was an opinion widely shared by hon. Members opposite that the County Committee could not have a sufficiently direct local interest and local connection with individual schools, and that from conditions of time and space it would be impossible for the members to be brought together to carry out what was intended. *A fortiori* a very large organisation with a place of meeting at a great distance from any of the schools would render impossible the state of things which the right hon. Gentleman contemplated. Two theories of these associations had been put before the Committee. There was the theory of the hon. and learned Member for Stroud, that these associations were merely advisory bodies, who would meet together, perhaps only once after the passing of this Bill, to consider the figures and accounts of the schools within their jurisdiction, and to prepare some kind of Report for the Education Department, upon which that Department could form their conclusions. The other point of view which had been put forward by the First Lord of the Treasury and others, was that these associations were to be the germ of a local educational authority of a new kind. His Amendment was arguable on either of these hypotheses. If the association were to be merely an advisory body, how utterly futile it would be to set up a large financial staff, to go to the expense of further inspectors, and to have all the cost and *entourage* of an additional education Department in every diocese of the country. If they were to have a merely advisory body of a peripatetic character to inquire into the condition of the Voluntary Schools in the diocese, there ought to be a cheap and a ready means by which that body could ascertain the facts. The areas proposed in his Amendment would be manageable areas. In the country, the Voluntary School managers of a district could meet in the market town, could prepare an intelligible Report to lay before the Education Department, and they could among themselves prepare it without any extra expenditure for staff. He knew many clergymen in the country who would carry out these duties admirably without any mutual animosity, and who would be able to deal with these questions in a business-like and firm manner. If they looked into the accounts of existing associations of this kind, such as the Diocesan Board of London, they saw that the expenses of management, inspection, examination, etc., ate up the larger share of the money. By the Amendment which he proposed, the whole of that would be avoided, and the managers of Voluntary Schools, in an area of reasonable size, would be able to meet together in one room and discuss their subject in a business-like fashion. If the Amendment were arguable on that basis, its argumentative basis was still stronger, if they viewed this new association as a new educational authority. Many of them who were enthusiastic supporters of the idea of national education felt that it would be a terrible mistake to introduce, through these associations, a form of local authority which would stand as an obstacle between them and a rational reorganisation of education in the future. In the paper circulated yesterday by the Lincoln Diocesan Board, hon. Members would see that it was stated:—

> "That it is of the greatest importance that in an association of Voluntary Schools care should be taken not to do anything which would tend to make the establishment of some other educational local authority impossible or even difficult in future."

Therefore he maintained that it was rational, when forming these associations, to form them on such lines and in such areas as would not preclude the permanent and proper re-organisation of education in this country in the future. He would remind the Committee that the Bill of last year, in the fourth clause, introduced for the first time this proposal of associations, and the proposal was then confined to a county or to portions of a county. The association proposal as foreshadowed in that Bill was on the lines on which he was urging the Committee to act that day, the principle being that these associations ought to be formed in some reasonable relation to the divisions in the country and the ordinary local government of the country. The Lincoln Diocesan Education Board had laid down in the strongest way their opinion that these associations should be formed in the areas which he was asking the Committee to adopt. The Board said:—

> "It is most important that the area within which associations of schools is permitted should be strictly defined. The best area appears to be the area of the poor law union."

The opinion had also been expressed by Canon Nunn that the areas of these associations foreshadowed in the discussion would be altogether too large. In his own county, a comparatively small one, which was typical of the ordinary conditions of the Midlands, and in which there were urban districts and very wide agricultural districts, there were about 275 Voluntary Schools, and, if his suggestion were adopted, six associations would be formed in the county. On the hypothesis that these associations were to be the germ of any reform of local government in regard to education, the organisation would be satisfactory, because it would be an organisation of men who were thoroughly acquainted with the details of the district, and who would be local representatives of the local interests of the Voluntary Schools. In the rural parts of the county there were not many School Boards, and practically all the schools of some of the unions would be in the hands of the managers of the Voluntary Schools. They would, therefore, have in the associations a combination which would rationally represent the local wants of the people of the district. Turn to the large towns and the case was still stronger. The Voluntary Schools in a large town have their special wants and organisation. He assumed that the association would have to go thoroughly into the matter, and would deal with the facts and necessities and all the circumstances out of which arose the claim for relief. The local spirit in large towns was intensely strong, and there would be found the greatest reluctance on the part of managers of the schools to having a portion of the grant taken from them, and the power of making representation to the Department taken away from those who had devoted themselves to the management of these schools as the work of their lives, and the control in these respects transferred to a set of men in some cathedral city miles away, men who came to the town in which the schools were situated perhaps only twice or thrice in the year. Certainly this would produce great discontent among the managers of these schools. Turn to the case of London, and he appealed confidently to hon. Members opposite, for their policy in regard to London had been exactly parallel to the lines of his Amendment, and in regard to local government they had foreshadowed again and again the idea of splitting up London into reasonable areas. He had nothing to do with that in its broader aspect, but in regard to the management of Voluntary Schools, there was a great deal to be said in favour of dividing London into areas. He hoped the Amendment would meet acceptance from the Committee in the interest of all concerned. It would reduce the inevitable expenditure in the administration of the Bill; and, though thi was a matter hon. Members opposit treated with indifference, it would b looked into closely in the country wher the scheme came to be worked. In loca interest and local capacity in regard t schools was the key to educational success. In all our towns, and in many o our villages, to local effort was due success in educational matters, and the arguments used last year against the adoptio of large areas were applicable on thi occasion, although only Voluntary School were being dealt with. He moved in Subsection (3) to leave out the words "in such areas and," in order to insert the words "in urban or rural sanitary districts."

*MR. HENRY HOBHOUSE (Somerset E.) was sorry he could not agree with the Amendment, for he fully recognised the practical and reasonable spirit in which it had been moved, and could not disguise from himself that, if they could, conformably with the objects of the Bill and the objects Members on his side of the House had in view, delineate any specific area for association which would coincide with an existing area of local government, it would be an immense advantage. The hon. Member wished to define the area as a rural or urban sanitary district. It was true some of these were of immense size—Manchester and Liverpool, for instance; and there was a great deal to be said for such large areas. But sanitary districts varied very much in size, and at the other end of the scale were small districts having populations of from 2,000 to 5,000, and containing perhaps two or three Voluntary Schools. Such districts he had knowledge of in his own county. Did not the hon. Gentleman see that to take such a small area for association would spoil the whole value of the scheme, and make any effectual system of distribution impossible with due regard to the interests of the schools? Take a larger area, take the town the hon. Member had mentioned, Lincoln. In that town were 15 Church Schools, two Wesleyan, one Roman Catholic, and one undenominational school. Did the hon. Member propose that all these schools should form one association in the City of Lincoln? He did not propose that; probably he would propose that the 15 Church Schools would form one association, but this number as not large enough to make association ally useful for the purposes for which was designed. It was not bodies for e management of schools they were ealing with, but bodies who would mply draw up schemes for the distribu- on of grants, according to varying needs. he effect of adopting the Amendment ould be to drop the principle of associa- on in large portions of the country for ny denomination, and the only way in hich a local government area could be dopted, or even a larger area, would be o make such association compulsory. If on. Members were prepared, and they ere not prepared, to force all schools nto association, to whatever denomina- ion they might belong—if they were pre- ared to force a small minority of Wes- eyan or Roman Catholic Schools into an ssociation chiefly composed of Church of England Schools, then there would be a reat deal more to be said for these mall local areas. But if these asso- iations were likely to be chiefly of a denominational character, then hey must be allowed to be formed on voluntary lines, and these would, as a rule, coincide with the existing areas of ecclesiastical organisation, and it would be impossible to take a local government area or even the districts of Her Majesty's Inspectors. He could wish it were not so, he could wish that such great differences did not exist between denominations, but things must be looked at as they were in fact, and it could hardly be regarded as practicable to force the schools of all denominations that happened to be in a local area into one association.

*Mr. HERBERT LEWIS (Flint Boroughs) said he had given notice of an Amendment which he understood it would now be in order to discuss, and which raised a different set of considerations to this Amendment now put forward. His proposal was, that these associations should be constituted in "civil" areas, and the point was this. The Committee was dealing with a large grant of public money, and he did not know that there was any precedent for making such a grant to a body of a purely ecclesiastical character. He had gathered the general idea from these Debates that the constitution of these associations would be diocesan. ["No, no!"] He would ask the hon. Member who contradicted him whether, as a matter of fact, it was not absolutely certain that, in the case of Church of England Schools, the associations would be diocesan? ["Hear!"] As a matter of fact they knew what would happen. Voluntary Schools in every diocese would be amalgamated into one association, and the area would not be civil, but ecclesiastical, the area of the diocese. The association would, of course, consist largely of clergymen, naturally so, because they took a great interest in schools, in fact, so much interest that they spoke of the schools in proprietorial terms. The natural head of the clergy was the Bishop, so there would be diocesan education boards presided over by a Bishop. A strong Bishop would have the future fortunes of the clergy, to a great extent, at his disposal, and what the Committee was now practically asked to do was to endow each of the Bishops with from £10,000 to £15,000 a year, to use largely at his own discretion—["No, no!"]—and for what purpose? He was only putting the probabilities of the case, and did not wish to say anything offensive to hon. Members. As a matter of fact they must know that a Bishop of strong character, a great and good man, could easily get his own way, and these associations being constituted upon the ecclesiastical area would be entirely under the control of the Bishop of the diocese. The money and the power would be used in Wales, at all events, not for educational purposes, but for the purposes of fighting Nonconformists. ["No, no!" *and* "Hear, hear!"] This was his ground of objection to the clause, though his reasons would not commend themselves to hon. Gentlemen opposite. Under this proposal a grant of public money was being made, and the very least Parliament should do would be to provide that the area should have some outward connection with the State and not with an ecclesiastical area. He ventured to ask the House whether, at the end of the nineteenth century, it was going so frankly to endow denominationalism in this way? He was under the impression that the current of thought and opinion was entirely in an opposite direction. He hoped the Committee would see the necessity of making the areas in which this public money was to be spent civil areas, and that it would not lend itself to the open endowment of a denomination in the way suggested by the Bill. ["Hear!"]

Mr. SCOTT-MONTAGU (Hants, New Forest) remarked that he had an Amendment on the Paper providing that no areas in rural districts should exceed district council areas except with the permission of the Department. There was a distinct feeling in many sparsely populated districts, especially in the south of England, that they might be overwhelmed by one or two big towns which had great powers of combination, and that they might not, therefore, quite get their fair share of the grant. ["Hear, hear!"] There were many Members on his side of the House who would like to know from the Government whether, if in a rural district, now in a rural district council area, the people desired to form themselves into an association, that association would be allowed to stand, even though there was an application for an association to include the whole diocese? ["Hear, hear!"] There were many cases in which there were large dioceses, embracing widely differing populations, whose sympathies were not at all with one another, and whose rating and means for subscribing to Voluntary Schools were not the same. He admitted there was a difficulty about the formation of the area. There seemed to him, outside the ecclesiastical, to be only three possible areas—namely, the diocesan, the county council, and the rural district. He should be glad if the Leader of the House would tell them whether an association which had been formed within a diocese would be allowed to have a separate existence even though an association for the whole diocesan area had been applied for?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON thought this Amendment afforded the Government an opportunity of making a general statement of their views on the question of areas, which would enable hon. Members to know on what basis the particular discussion was to be conducted. What hon. Members on his side of the House desired to know was whether these areas were to be ecclesiastical or civil. The Amendment of his hon. Friend behind him, as well as that of the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Scott-Montagu) went to show that there was a very considerable feeling on

Mr. Herbert Lewis.

both sides that they did not want th
associations to be put on other tha
existing areas. The blot in their count
government arrangements was the eno
mous number and complication of the
areas, and instead of creating new one
the contemplated areas ought to be c
terminous with the existing areas.
appeared to him the real evil at th
bottom of these associations was tha
whatever area they fixed they must nece
sarily get considerable inequalities b
tween district and district. The Firs
Lord of the Treasury had said that i
giving this money the object of the Go
ernment was not only to give to necessi
tous schools, but also, in the fullest po
sible degree, according to their nece
sity; therefore, any money that did n
go to them in proportion to the necessi
ties of the schools would be really largel
wasted. But, as he had said, howeve
they constituted these associations, the
must be considerable inequalities an
divergencies between district and di
trict. One association would cover
richer area than another; it would r
ceive 5s. per head for the children i
attendance at the schools, and the resul
would be that one association having
richer number of schools than anothe
would be able to give a larger sum pe
head to its necessitous schools than th
association which covered a poorer area
On that ground he was sorry to say h
could not support the particular Amend
ment before the Committee, as it woul
limit the area of the associations s
greatly that the inequalities to which h
had referred would be largely accen
tuated. The hon. Member opposite ha
suggested three possible areas, and he, fo
one, considered the best area of the thre
was the county council area. He hel
this belief first, on the ground that it wa
the larger area, and therefore the inequa
lities between district and district woul
be less than if there were smaller areas
and secondly, because it was an are
which had now become fully recognise
and in every case, though there woul
still be inequalities, would cover a ver
large number of schools, some necessitou
and some of a richer character. On th
ground, therefore, that the proposal o
his hon. Friend limited them too much
and created too many of these associ
tions, he was afraid he could not give i
his support. But the Amendment wa

put in such a way that they should vote for it on the ground that it did suggest instead of the ecclesiastical, a civil area; and, secondly, that while supporting these words they left it open to discuss the subsequent Amendment of his hon. Friend below the gangway, or the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman opposite who had last spoken.

Mr. SAMUEL EVANS thought the Amendment he had on the Paper would meet with the approval of the hon. Member for the New Forest Division of Hants. The objection to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Northampton was that in many cases these districts would be too small for associations. In rural districts it might mean that in some cases there was only one school, so that the power of association in the Bill could not be exercised if the Amendment were adopted. There was also the objection of the hon. Member for Somersetshire that there would be a difficulty in getting Voluntary Schools, belonging to various denominations in small districts, to combine together. The Amendment of which he had given notice proposed, without defining them exactly, that the areas should not be smaller than the county and county boroughs. He had looked at the returns of the Education Department, and he found there were 99 inspectors' districts already. In other words, the school districts of the county were divided into 99, and the areas of the county would not be far short of the areas which were now comprised in the various districts of the inspectors. Of course the counties themselves would be very unequal. In some counties there were very many schools, and in others a much smaller number. In Lancashire there were 1,578 Voluntary Schools, and in Yorkshire 1,444, while in Rutland there were only 85. If the associations were to work at all, there ought to be some limit of area given to the Education Department, and he entirely agreed with the view that they ought to be civil areas. They had now a multiplicity of areas for various kinds of local government, and it would not be advisable to increase the number. There was one argument in favour of the suggestion which he made to the First Lord of the Treasury, and that was that the Government themselves in their Bill of last year defined the county and the county borough as the proper area for the educational authority. He desired to ask the First Lord of the Treasury why the Government did not adopt this year the area and the districts they proposed in the Bill of last year.

*Colonel VICTOR MILWARD (Warwickshire, Stratford-on-Avon) said he did not share the view of the hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets, and he hoped the Government would not express their views on this question until they had heard what had been said, and even then would not bind themselves down to a hard-and-fast line, because in many areas there must be a certain amount of elasticity. The areas should be large enough to induce persons of real ability to attend the meetings which would be held. As in the County Council they had better men than they had in the District Council, and in the District Council better men than in the Parish Council, so he hoped the area would be large enough to attract the best men. Secondly, he hoped the area would be one that would commend itself to the laity. [*Opposition cheers.*] Hon. Gentlemen opposite had talked about the clergy, and said there was to be an attempt to make this a clerical organisation. The hon. Member for Anglesey said the clerical element must be satisfied, and that this body must be a clerical body. The hon. Member for East Northamptonshire (Mr. Channing) said this was to be a sacerdotal organisation, and the hon. Member for Flintshire had in various ways repeated the same thing. He held in his hands some evidence that the clergy of the country did not view the matter in that light at all. The executive committee of the Diocesan Society held a meeting at Worcester yesterday, and if any set of persons were to be suspected they were. They were the head and front of the offending; they were the head centre of the diocesan organisation of Worcester; and the Archdeacon of Worcester said at their sub-committee that day some members were of opinion that the areas of the federation should have civil rather than ecclesiastical boundaries. [*Opposition cheers.*] He was sure if the federations were to obtain the confidence of the public they had better include all Voluntary Schools and be not merely a Church association, a British association, a Roman Catholic association, or a Wesleyan association, but a general federation. He (Colonel Milward) agreed that if possible the association should include all denominations. He said that, having had experience, and he therefore thought the organisation should not be a diocesan organisation. He also thought it should not be a county organisation, but should be fixed according to the areas of the inspectors. [*Opposition cheers.*] They had to get together the representatives of a large number of schools to divide a certain amount of public money. The Worcester Diocesan organisation extended into five inspectors' districts, and unless an inspectors' area was adopted, considerable complications would arise, and perpetual difficulties would have to be faced. The diocesan associations were already associations to help necessitous schools, and these proposed associations would meet together in the same way. They would know how much money they had to divide, and they would inquire into the circumstances of the different schools, and he had not the least doubt they would be able to divide the money in a manner satisfactory to the schools. ["Hear, hear!"] If they adhered to the diocesan federations they would have to incur a large cost in respect of inspection and organisation, but if they had the inspectors' area they would still have the diocesan organisation working by their side, still carrying on the work of diocesan inspection. The present diocesan organisation cost about £350. The diocese of the new body need not cost more than £40 or £50 at the outside the first year, and gradually less afterwards, and he believed that these bodies would securely strengthen the Voluntary Schools. ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. JOHN DILLON (Mayo, E.) differed from the opinion that the associations should include schools of all denominations. He felt reluctant to vote for the compulsory character of the Association Clause, and his reluctance would be increased if it was sought to drive the Catholic schools of the country into associations dominated by schools connected with the Church of England.

Sir W. HART DYKE (Kent, Dartford): There is a special clause in the Bill to guard against that.

Mr. DILLON said he was aware of this. He believed the associations would work better if voluntary, and he should be extremely hostile to Catholic schools being forced into associations predominated by the Church of England. The hon. Member for Hampshire said there were three different alternatives in dealing with the question of area. He entirely differed from the hon. Member. He spoke as if there were only schools connected with one denomination. But this Bill was being passed, not for the benefit of one religious denomination, but for the benefit of persons of every religious denomination whose religious convictions impelled them to send their children to a religious school. It was of vital importance that the Committee should have some information from the Government of their intentions in regard to these denominations, whose schools were often scattered, sometimes so scattered that if an attempt were made to fix the area by population or a number of schools, the associations would cover so large an area that in many cases it would be almost impossible to administer them. The Committee ought to be informed of the intention of the Government as to the unit for the associations. If the unit of association were to be fixed approximately by the number of schools concerned, they would like to have some idea of what would be the minimum number of schools for an association. He assumed that the number of schools must be the number of schools in a district belonging to one denomination. He thought that Roman Catholics would form their own association. He wished to know whether the area was to be geographical, whether it would be based on a unit of population, or on the number of schools in a certain district which were of one denomination. His attitude towards the association proposal would largely depend on the intention of the Government in regard to the compulsory part of the section.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: I think the Committee will consider that I have been justified in holding back on this Amendment until we have heard some of the various conflicting proposals which are intended as substitutes for that which the Government has put forward for acceptance by the House. We have seen that each speaker has a new plan for settling the area in which he thinks these associations ought to be formed. It is, perhaps, not an inopportune object lesson for these Gentlemen to see how impossible it would have been for the Government to obtain unanimity if they had decided to introduce into the

Bill some fixed area in which all associations would have to be formed. It has been freely suggested throughout the course of these discussions that the vagueness, as our opponents term it—but the elasticity as I prefer to term it—which has been left in the Bill in relation to these associations is little better than a drafting dodge on the part of the Government, or an obscure statement by those who have not made up their own minds, or who have not taken the trouble to think out the full character of their own proposals. I can assure the Committee that neither of those charitable explanations is the correct one. It has not been to avoid drafting difficulties, or because we have not given time and attention to the matter, that we have deliberately come to the conclusion that the elastic framework which we have provided for these associations is the only possible framework which will meet the necessities of the case. ["Hear, hear!"] Last night the Committee decided by a very large majority that the Education Department was to be assisted in its work by the associations voluntarily formed, and the only question we have now got to determine is whether we shall lay down in the Bill elaborate statutory regulations dealing with the constitution and area of these associations, or whether we shall leave them to develop in each district according to the needs of the district, and according to the needs of the class of denominational school. We have unhesitatingly decided that the fluid method is better than the rigid method—["hear, hear!"]—that the discretion left to the Department was a necessary discretion, and that the House would be extremely ill-advised if it had attempted to tie down in rigid fetters the new bodies which it is hoped may be called into existence after this Bill has become law. In answer to the hon. Member for East Mayo, I would say that the associations are voluntary associations in the fullest sense of the word. I am not referring now to the later sub-section, in which, no doubt, there is a possible potential loss to any school which unreasonably refuses to join the association. I am now simply dealing with the formation of the associations themselves, and these associations are unquestionably voluntary, and there is no power given to the Department by the Bill to compel Voluntary Schools who are unwilling to join the associations to carry out that policy. That alone shows the enormous difference that there is between the associations that we wish to call into existence and the local authorities with whom these associations have been so freely compared. The only statutory power which is given to the associations by the Bill is the power of advising. ["Hear, hear!"] If, when they are called into existence, they should not confine their functions to advising the Department, but should voluntarily consult together on questions of common interest to all of them, I should rejoice, and think that a most useful addition to their functions. Here, again, there is a distinction between these bodies thus voluntarily created and the local authorities, for the statutory duties of the local authority are the only duties which they must perform. We, therefore, have decided that the elasticity given by the Bill is absolutely essential if the objects of the Bill are to be carried out. Those views are greatly strengthened when we consider the necessary doubt which hangs over the constitution and work of bodies which we do not force into existence, but which will be proposed for our acceptance by bodies voluntarily joining together to form associations. For example, would it not be folly for the House of Commons or Parliament to attempt to lay down regulations for these associations, when it does not know, and cannot know, whether these associations will be denominational or not? I have no doubt that, broadly speaking, the Roman Catholics will prefer to do what they have a perfect right to do under the Bill—namely, to form separate associations, themselves dealing with the money allotted.

MR. DILLON asked whether it was quite clear that they could form a separate association in the same area where an association existed.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I am coming to that directly. In the same way the Wesleyan body may possibly refuse to form associations at all, or they may decide to form associations entirely composed of Wesleyan schools, or they may desire to join associations constituted partly of other denominations. The result would be exactly what the hon. Gentleman pointed out in his interruption; you will necessarily have, if these associations are denominational, associations of different

There had been a distinct declaration on the part of hon. Gentlemen opposite in favour of some definition of these words in the clause; and it was certain that these association areas ought to be civil and not ecclesiastical areas. The hon. and gallant Member for Worcestershire had quoted one dignitary of the Church on this question. He would quote another. Speaking at a meeting of the Houses of Convocation in November last, the Bishop of Hereford said:—

> "There is another course; and that is, with an equally light heart and very little discussion, voting compulsory federation. There are not, I fancy, half-a-adozen people in this room who have thought out the results of that course. You are proposing to set up a compulsory ecclesiastical authority everywhere to administer the funds of the State. I am not sufficiently sanguine to believe or to hope that the country will accept that; if they do not, where are we?"

Representing a constituency which contained an overwhelming majority of Nonconformists and Board Schools, he was extremely doubtful as to the discretion to be exercised by an ecclesiastical body in that district.

MR. HUMPHREYS-OWEN (Montgomery) who was indistinctly heard, said that, taking the unit of one million suggested by the Vice President of the Council, an association would just about cover 11 counties in North and South Wales, excluding Glamorgan and Monmouth. If that were to be the area of the association for Wales, it was not possible to exaggerate the inconvenience which would be imposed on members of the association. What common aims could schools in opposite ends of the Principality have? And even supposing that the diocese was taken as the area, the area would be so wide that there was hardly a single place in any diocese in Wales to and from which it would be possible for all the members of the association to travel in one day. Thus a very onerous tax would be imposed on the members. The number of children in Church schools in Wales was 99,000, while there were in Board Schools 150,000. The parents of the great majority of the 99,000 children in Voluntary Schools were Nonconformists; and he appealed to the noble Lord the Member for Rochester to say whether it was right that the education of those children should be placed entirely in the hands of bodies representing another church? As had been pointed out, this was the first step towards independent action of the Church of England. Surely, if that was the case it was the imperative duty of Parliament to see that at all events it retained some power over the manner in which the associations were formed. When the practical working of the Bill was fully apprehended by the country it would be a much graver matter than hon. Gentlemen opposite seemed to anticipate. In Wales especially, if the county area was not adopted, great difficulty would be experienced in Wales in the working of the Act.

SIR H. FOWLER suggested that if the right hon. Gentleman would agree to withdraw the sub-section which made these associations compulsory, a great many of the objections which hon. Members took to them would be, if not removed, at all events considerably modified. It was idle to say that an association was voluntary when those who were to compose it were forced to come into it or pay a pecuniary fine. In last year's Bill the Government left it perfectly open to an association whether it would go in or not, but in leaving it open the Bill defined the area. The Bill said:—

> "The association may represent for the purpose of this section, either all the schools or all the schools of a particular religious denomination in the county, or any part of the county, or some of such schools."

Now, the area last year was that of the county. There was great force in what the hon. Member for Mayo said that they could not expect Roman Catholic schools to form part of an association in which that denomination would be in a minority; and that might apply to other Nonconformist schools. At all events, the Government, in their great Bill of last year, came to the conclusion that the county area was the proper area, whereas now the right hon. Gentleman took strong objection to the county area. Be that as it might, would the right hon. Gentleman agree to lay the scheme of association before Parliament in order that Parliament might have an opportunity of pronouncing an opinion upon it? He could not conceive upon what ground of experience or Parliamentary practice the Government should refuse to do that. Why should the Education Department be supreme? Why should not Members of Parliament representing denominations, great or small, or no denomination at all, have the right to say, "The Education Department has framed a scheme which is unjust to those we represent, and against which there is no appeal, and which scheme can be enforced by a pecuniary fine"? He was anxious to make the Act as workable as possible. There were large interests at stake, and conflicts of interest which might possibly assume a religious and sectarian character. It was desirable, therefore, that Parliament should keep the control in its own hands so as to prevent those difficulties coming to the surface. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would endeavour to meet the views of the Opposition, and not meet them with a perpetual *non possumus*. If he insisted that the delimitation of areas was to be left to the Department, then the corollary of that was that the scheme when formulated should be submitted to the judgment of the House.

*Mr. H. C. F. LUTTRELL (Devon, Tavistock) said that the object of the Amendment was to localise the associations, and, in his judgment, it was better to lay it down that the Education Department should choose as far as possible smaller districts. Local wants would then be attended to. An objection had been raised by the hon. Member for Somerset (Mr. Hobhouse) that if this Amendment were carried there would be some districts too small to be workable. No doubt there was some validity in this, but it must also be borne in mind that if it were not carried the areas might be much too large, and he contended that there was far greater objection to their being too large than too small. The objection of the hon. Member for Somerset would be met by adding the words "except with the permission of the Education Department." The hon. Member for Stratford-on-Avon had commented on the importance of the lay element being represented. This, in his opinion, was very important, but if the lay element was to be adequately represented the areas must not be too large. In the Bill there was nothing to prevent the areas being immense. It was possible under the Bill to have one association for the whole of England and one for Wales. How could the lay element be represented if this was done? The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House had said it was preferable to have a fluid Measure to a rigid one. But he would point out that a fluid Measure might overflow, and to have only one or two associations would be an overflowing which would prevent any local administration by the lay element, and would preclude, too, any elasticity in instruction according to the local wants and requirements of the parents. On these grounds he urged the importance of the Amendment.

Mr. REGINALD McKENNA (Monmouthshire, N.) said it was clear that the associations could not be formed in the present year, and the money would have to be distributed by the Department, which could not undertake any discrimination between the schools. Definite rules should be made for the formation of associations, in order that there should be no delay.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon Boroughs) asked whether it was proposed to have separate associations for town schools and separate associations for country schools?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: No.

Question put, "That the words 'in such areas and' stand part of the clause."

The Committee divided—Ayes, 324; Noes, 125.—(Division List, No. 91.)

And, it being after Half-past Five of the clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

LAND LAW (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

COUNTY COURTS BILL.

Second Reading defered till Monday, 22nd March.

MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE (IRELAND) (No. 2) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday, 26th March.

INDUSTRIES (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

UNLAWFUL POSSESSION BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Second Reading [29th January] further adjourned till Wednesday, 7th April.

SURVEYORS (COUNTY DUBLIN) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

POOR LAW OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

VEHICLES (LIGHTS) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday.

RATING OF MACHINERY SUSPENSORY BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday, 24th March.

CEMETERIES RATING BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday, 26th March.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (COUNTY COUNCIL CLERKS) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday.

MERCHANT SHIPPING (UNDERMANNING) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday, 19th March.

SOLICITORS (MAGISTRACY) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday next.

SUPPLY.

Committee deferred till Friday.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Committee deferred till Friday.

PREFERENTIAL PAYMENTS IN BANKRUPTCY ACT (1888) AMENDMENT BILL.

Third Reading deferred till To-morrow.

TENANT RIGHT IN TOWNS (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

LICENSING EXEMPTION (HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

INDUSTRIAL AND PROVIDENT AND INCORPORATED BUILDING SOCIETIES (PURCHASE OF FEE SIMPLE) BILL.

Second Reading upon Thursday, 18th March.

CRETE (RELIEF OF CANDAMOS).

On the Motion "That this House do now adjourn,"

Sir W. HARCOURT said: I wish to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will communicate to the House the text of the replies given by the Porte and by Greece to the Notes that have been addressed to them, and particularly that of the supplementary reply which I see it is stated in the journals to-day has been made by the Greek Government?

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers, may I ask whether there is any news that can be communicated to the House with regard to the expedition for the relief of the garrison and loyal population of Candamos?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. G. Curzon, Lancashire, Southport): In reply to the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition, I have to say we have not heard of any supplementary reply from the Greek Government. With regard to the two replies from the Greek Government and from the Porte, both will be laid on the Table with the utmost possible speed. No reply has been received from the Porte to the supplementary Note, but we have reason to believe they accept it in principle. With regard to the question of the relief of Candamos, I am very happy to be able to inform the House that we have received a telegram from Her Majesty's Consul, Sir A. Biliotti, to this effect:—

> "Successfully rescued to-day, but not without the greatest peril, 523 men, 1,047 women and children, and 340 soldiers from Candamos. Picked (up) on way back 112 soldiers from Spaniako blockhouse. Natives of Candamos embarked. We are now embarking Mussulman refugees at Selino Castelli, about 1,000. Danger of Christians attacking Selino Castelli."

House adjourned at Ten minutes before Six o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 11th March 1897.

PLAGUE IN BOMBAY.

LORD REAY expressed his satisfaction with the vigorous measures which had been taken by the local authorities in Bombay to deal with insanitary buildings. This was a very great opportunity for dealing in a thorough manner with the sanitary needs of the city of Bombay, and he trusted that the local authorities would receive all the support and financial aid they deserved in attaining the aim and object which they had at heart. It was under the influence of the prevalent disease that the authorities would naturally enlist more easily that co-operation of those most interested which would facilitate the carrying out of measures which in ordinary times often met with a good deal of opposition. Having noticed that Dr. Yersin had reached Bombay, he ventured to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether any reports had been received of the results of Dr. Yersin's operations since his arrival, and any steps taken to prepare the Yersin serum in Bombay, and to provide a supply of it to the towns of Poona, Karachi, Surat, and to other localities in which the disease had declared itself; and what further information had been received with reference to Professor Haffkine's inoculations, the degree of protection they afford, and the time during which they remain operative?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (The EARL of ONSLOW): The noble Lord has a very intimate acquaintance with the locality in which the plague unfortunately is now prevalent—namely, the Presidency of Bombay, and I am very glad to hear from his lips that he approves of the steps taken by the Government of Bombay to combat the plague. Steps have not been taken in the town of Bombay only, but equally vigorous measures have been taken in Karachi and Poona, and I can assure the noble Lord that the sanction of the Secretary of State will not be refused to any expenditure which may be deemed by the Governments of India and Bombay necessary to combat the plague. With regard to the question the noble Lord has addressed to me, I have to say that Dr. Yersin has returned to Bombay, and the only intelligence that we have as yet received is that he reached Bombay and began work on March 6; the effect of his remedy on plague patients only a day or two ill is reported to be "surprisingly good," while cases of old standing are said to be "not so much benefited." Information has not yet been received regarding attempts to provide or use Dr. Yersin's or Professor Haffkine's serum at Poona and Karachi. Regarding operations with Professor Haffkine's serum, the following further information has been received. Up to and including March 7, 2,341 persons had been inoculated, of whom only two (in addition to the two described in my answer to the noble Lord on February 15) have been attacked by plague; both attacks occurred within five days of inoculation, and both sufferers are alive. People are coming forward more freely to be inoculated, and the practice is extending. The Government of Bombay are preparing an organisation for the extension of depôts for purposes of inoculation and for instructing medical officers in the process. Steps are also being taken by the Government of Bombay for popularising prophylactic inoculation and for increasing the amount of lymph that can be produced. The Secretary of State will receive information weekly of the extent to which the practice is resorted to, with reports as to its efficacy, and those I shall be willing to furnish the noble Lord with from time to time if he should so desire.

*VISCOUNT CLIFDEN said their Lordships might not know it, but the man who was combating this great disease in Bombay was a German. He believed the man who thought he could combat successfully the cholera was a German, or, at all events, a foreigner. The man who had gone to the Cape to fight rinderpest was also a German. From what he had been told, he knew there were men in England quite as able to do these things as foreigners; it was only a matter of money.

INDIAN FAMINE (MANSION HOUSE) FUND.

LORD WENLOCK asked the Under Secretary of State for India whether he could give any information as to the manner in which the Mansion House

Fund had been and would be expended in India; and whether there was ample scope for the beneficial application of the money if the amount subscribed were to reach a figure considerably higher than the present total. Their lordships were aware that the Lord Mayor of London had started what was known as the Mansion House Fund, and had appealed to the public to assist him in raising money for the relief of the distress in India. The public had responded most nobly to the appeal, but it appeared to him it would be a very good thing if the information he asked for could be given, not only for the satisfaction of those who had already responded to the appeal, but of those who were still withholding their subscriptions.

*THE EARL OF ONSLOW: As to the second question of the noble Lord, I can at once answer that there is abundant scope for the employment of such funds. But the noble Lord asks me whether I can give him any information as to the way in which the money has been spent by the Committee in India. The noble Lord will perhaps have observed that in the Blue Book of famine Papers which has been presented, the Government of India have laid down the objects to which it is proposed to apply this fund, and we are informed that the Central Committee has applied the money in the manner specified. They have allotted 21 lakhs to provincial committees for urgent demands, and they will make further large distributions shortly. The provincial committees are understood to be working on the lines defined by Government, but are being asked to report their working for the information of the Secretary of State. With regard to the amount which may be required as compared with the amount which has been subscribed, the noble Lord is no doubt aware that the Mansion House Fund now amounts to about £411,000. In addition to that considerable sums have been remitted direct from Lancashire, Glasgow, and other places, and besides that large subscriptions had been raised in India. Subscriptions had also been started in the United States, in Canada, in our Australian colonies, and elsewhere. We do not know what amounts those have reached, but no doubt a considerable sum will be collected. But really the whole question of how much is likely to be able to be profitably utilised by the Central Committee depends entirely upon the nature of the next monsoon. If the next monsoon is, as we all hope, a good one, the amount of the funds which will be provided will be adequate to deal with the emergency. But if it should be otherwise, it is almost impossible to exaggerate or overstate the amount which may be required to provide for so lamentable a contingency. I ought to add that there has not, in these considerations, been taken into account what may be required by the native States, but, excluding that, the Central Committee believe that with a good monsoon 140 lakhs—that is, something between £800,000 and £900,000—ought to be sufficient to enable them to cope with the immediate requirements of the situation. But I need hardly assure your Lordships that every sixpence which is subscribed by the public, either at home or in our colonies, will be utilised by the Central Committee in India in the re-establishment of some of those unfortunate people, who, after their immediate and pressing necessities have been relieved by the Government of India, will have to be started again in life to pursue their ordinary avocations.

LORD OVERTOUN asked whether any special effort would be made to secure the co-operation of the missionaries of the various denominations. At the end of the last famine missionaries were asked to undertake the care of orphans. Would anything similar be done on the present occasion?

*THE EARL OF ONSLOW understood that the Central Committee would gladly welcome the assistance of missionary societies.

JURIES DETENTION BILL.

Brought from the Commons; Read 1^a, and to be printed.—[No. 27.]

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

LONDON (BOROUGH ROAD, SOUTHWARK) PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

Read 2^a (according to Order), and committed to a Committee of the whole House To-morrow.

House adjourned at a Quarter before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a Quarter past Ten o'Clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 11th March 1897.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

CHELSEA WATER BILL.

*Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) moved, "That this Bill be now read a Second time." He explained that he made the Motion in his private capacity as a London Member, not speaking for the front Opposition Bench or in any way as a present or prospective member of the London County Council. When asked by the Council, he undertook the duty of moving the Second Reading. He had done so with some hope that, after the protracted and repeated discussions in the House, there would be a prospect of arriving at a general agreement. He would endeavour to deal with the subject with due moderation, and to avoid saying anything to aggravate the situation. There was no question of greater moment to the citizens and ratepayers of the Metropolis. Special attention had of late been drawn to the subject from the fact that there had been two or three occasions of late in certain parts of London of deficiency in the supply provided by at least one of the water companies. The Government, he understood, after lengthened consideration had come to the conclusion that they could not support the Second Reading of these Bills, and that made it more necessary for him to ask the indulgence of the House in stating the case for the promoters. Though the particular Bill before the House was that in relation to the Chelsea Company, the London County Council pledged itself to deal with the group of eight Bills upon one principle and system. It was scarcely necessary to discuss the question whether, as a matter of principle, it was advantageous and in the public interest that the water supply of a district should be under the control of the representatives of the ratepayers. In something like 45 out of 64 county boroughs the local authorities had the supply in their own hands, and it was quite certain that if any borough, except London, asked for leave to purchase its water supply, the House would immediately give its assent, of course on a just and reasonable basis. The Secretary for the Colonies in his speech of last year dealt with this question of principle. He did not quote the words to bind the right hon. Gentleman to them, but they contained a general proposition to which the House would assent. The right hon. Gentleman, on the 24th March of last year, speaking on the Second Reading of these Bills, said:—

> "In this matter, so far as the main principle goes, I am entirely in agreement. I do believe that after the fullest inquiry you will always come back to this—that the water supply of a great city ought to be in the hands of a representative authority. If you make a purchase on a fair basis it is desirable in the interests of everybody that what is absolutely a necessary of life, what is one of the most important adjuncts to the sanitary condition of a great population, should be under the control of the representatives of the people. Therefore I agree with the County Council in what I believe to be their main object."

He considered he was justified in quoting those words. But they were told that the complexity and difficulty of dealing with the London question, on account of the size of the metropolis, put it apart from this general principle, and that it ought to be dealt with on a different basis. In his opinion, however, that was a greater and not a lesser reason for dealing with the matter as one of urgency. The whole of the eight London water companies varied as to the quantity and quality of the water, as to pressure and constancy of supply, as to the rating and charge, and to the burden of charge, and as to the cost of administration and of profits. Roughly speaking, the richer parts were better served and at a cheaper rate than the poorer districts.

*Mr. F. G. BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham): The charge per thousand gallons by the East London Company is much less than the charge per thousand gallons by any of the other companies. It is because the rateable value is lower that the percentage charged is higher, but the charge per head of the population is much less.

*Mr. BUXTON thought the hon. Member would find from the statistics that the charge on rateable value, taken all round, was heavier by the East London Water Company than by the Chelsea Company, with which they were at present dealing. But he did not desire to dwell on that, for his contention was that in the Metropolis, as in large municipalities, the charges for water ought to be uniform for an equal supply to all the inhabitants, and that any surplus should go in reduction of the charges made to the consumers. If they were to amalgamate the eight water companies, it was obvious that a considerable economy would be effected in the cost of administration, and in other ways by which the consumer would benefit. The cost of management of the London water companies varied from 4s. per head in the highest case to 2s. 1d. in the lowest, whereas the highest charge of any great municipality was 2s. 4d. per head, as against 1s. 2d., the lowest in a great municipality like Leeds. ["Hear, hear!"] Again, the London companies profited by the annual increase of the rateable value of the metropolis, "the unearned increment," because their charges were based upon it, and the result was that, without spending a single sixpence upon extra works, they received, he did not think it was an exaggeration to say, something like £10,000 a year extra profit without doing anything additional for it. If the companies were purchased the whole of that additional advantage would go to the ratepayers instead of to private companies. ["Hear, hear!"] It had been generally agreed that some change was desirable, and the Government substantially admitted that by the introduction of their Bill of last year. In introducing that Bill Lord James of Hereford said the Measure had been framed on the assumption that there existed a great and growing opinion that the time had come when the management of the water supply of the metropolis and the surrounding districts should be vested in the hands of a responsible and public representative body. That was the basis upon which the present Bills were introduced, and the County Council were further justified in their action in this matter by the Report of the Select Committee of 1891, presided over by the present Home Secretary, which recommended that the London County Council should be made the responsible water authority for London, and that when so constituted it should be required to purchase, either alone or in conjunction with the authorities of the outside area, the undertakings of the eight water companies. He therefore said that the London County Council, after the statement of the Government, and after the reports of the different Committees which had considered this question, were justified, nay, were bound to, promote these Bills. In asking the House to assent to the Second Reading, he was not asking them to indorse the principle that the London County Council should necessarily be the future water authority throughout London. The House was in no sense of the term asked to indorse the principle of the authority proposed in these Bills. The question of the authority was open to the consideration of the Committee, and it was obvious that if ever an authority were created it would take over any powers conferred on the County Council by Parliament. The only principle really involved, and to which he asked the House to assent, was that laid down by the Colonial Secretary—that the water companies ought no longer to be private concerns, but in the possession and under the control of the representatives of the ratepayers in London and elsewhere. So the question to a large extent became one of urgency and one of terms. Last year the Bills were opposed because the Government intended to pass this Bill. But the Bill introduced by the Government had disappeared, and it was stated, with some authority, that the Government had no intention this Session to introduce anything in the nature of a comprehensive Bill to create a water authority. But the Government stated that they would appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the financial aspects of the purchase of the London water companies by the ratepayers; and to introduce a modern Measure of temporary control. The appointment of a Royal Commission was simply an excuse for further delay —[*Ministerial cries of* "No!"]—while, by the Second Reading of the Bills before the House the position would not be prejudiced, time would be saved, and the present authority in London enabled to initiate a purchase scheme. How could any Royal Commission at the present moment give any opinion which would be of value in the matter? The only question in doubt just now was that of the price which should be paid in the purchase of the water companies' undertakings. A Measure of temporary control would not carry the question of purchase any further than before, and the existence of the Royal Commission on the subject would tend to delay. In his opinion and that of the County Council the matter was too urgent to be met by a dilatory plea of the appointment of a Royal Commission and a "modest" Measure of control. The uncertainty as to the future of the water companies—whether they were to go on, be amalgamated, controlled, or purchased —was serious for the consumers and the water companies themselves. The Committee of last year, to which some of the Bills were referred, included a majority of the supporters of the Government; yet it unanimously expressed the opinion that the present position of the matter was not in accordance with the public interest, and things were in an anomalous position from which it would be to the public interest that the water companies and the inhabitants of London should be free. If the question which had so long been before Parliament were opened again, to be re-negotiated, it would be delayed for many years, and perhaps for ever. The objections to the Bill, apart from principle, were three, and related to detail, arbitration, and outside areas. The position of the debenture and shareholders in the companies in the event of purchase was a matter which might well be left to a Committee of the House. The real point after all was that of the price to be paid for the water companies' property, and the method of arriving at a price which would be just and fair on both sides. The County Council were willing to give a fair and just price. He admitted that the arbitration clause in the Bill of 1895 was hardly a fair or just one. [*Ministerial cheers.*] But that clause had disappeared, and the proposal now made was contained in Clause 7 of each of the eight Bills before the House. For himself and those who were promoting the Bill, he might say there was no desire that the price to be given should be otherwise than just and fair. That was properly and fairly provided for in the clause to which he had referred. He could safely say that the London County Council was unanimously of opinion that this clause was a just one as between buyer and seller. Last year the Government had said that in dealing with questions of this sort they ought not to introduce a new system of purchase, but ought to proceed on the well-recognised principle of the Lands Clauses Act. There was no doubt great force in that contention, but special circumstances might very well require special treatment. That Act was intended for purchases of land chiefly by railway companies and local authorities, and, after all, the question of the land was in this case by far the smallest interest involved. This purchase was not one that could be adequately dealt with under the Lands Clauses Act, for he was informed that, looking to the limitation contained in the Act, and to the practice that prevailed in interpreting that Act, circumstances that ought to receive due weight in this case could not be entertained by the arbitrators in considering the price. Take two points. It would be necessary to consider the question of how far, under the statutory obligations of the companies, the present needs of London in regard to water supply were adequately supplied, and how far future requirements would involve additional expenditure by these companies. That was an essential question, and it was one which they were advised could not be taken into account without some alteration of the Lands Clauses Act. They believed that under the Lands Clauses Act it would not be possible for the arbitrators, dealing as they did with present income as the real basis on which they assessed a claim, to capitalise the purchase price of the different companies on just terms. In one case a company might be spending an inadequate sum upon filtration and supply, and matters of that sort, while another company might be spending a much larger sum for improving the supply that was given to the ratepayers. Those two points ought necessarily to be taken into account in considering the value. Then there was another objection, namely, to the custom which had grown up under the Lands Clauses Act. Under the Lands Clauses system, as it had been interpreted by many arbitrators, there was a practical direction to the arbitrator that he was not only to take into account the actual value, but to give something for incidental injury, which was usually in round numbers an increased sum of 10 per cent. This was given to the individual for disturbance and for satisfaction of sentiment, but there was no sentiment connected with a water share. These were matters in regard to which the Committee to which the Bill was referred would have full power of deciding what was a full and fair value. The London

County Council did not in any sense desire that the price should be other than a fair and just one, but they were determined, as far as they could, to protect themselves from extravagant claims, and from exorbitant prices being given to the water company's shareholders. Then as to the important point of the outside areas and the outside authorities, the House would remember that last year the President of the Local Government Board and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, had referred at some length to this matter. The former had said that there must be co-operation between the Council and the outside authorities. The Secretary of State for the Colonies had said that they must take into account the outside authorities, and must consider the question of sentiment. He had said that it was no good riding rough-shod over them, or pressing a Bill to which they objected. He entirely agreed with the right hon. Gentleman. But this year, and even within the last few weeks, there had been, he was glad to say, a considerable development in this direction. As regarded these outside areas and outside authorities the London County Council had come to a provisional agreement with every one of them, with the exception of the Middlesex County Council. [An HON. MEMBER: "A very important one!"] He admitted that that was an important exception, but he believed, if the Bill were passed on the understanding that they should come to an agreement, the County Council would also be willing to come to terms. [Col. LOCKWOOD: "Essex."] He understood that they had come to provisional terms with the Essex County Council. [An HON. MEMBER: "Hertfordshire."] He believed that as a matter of fact some satisfactory negotiations had been come to with Hertfordshire, but practically they were not consumers of water that came to the metropolis. The point he was dealing with was the question of these authorities as consumers of water, not purchasers. He himself thought, as he knew by experience as a fisherman, that they took too much water from Hertfordshire. With the exception of the county of Middlesex, the other authorities had come to provisional agreements which would ultimately become regular agreements.

COL. LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping) said he did not think the hon. Member was right about Essex. He understood that the agreement was not signed, and that they refused to sign it the other day.

*MR. BUXTON said he was glad of the interruption, as he did not wish to mislead the House. But he understood that the position as regarded Essex and other authorities, was that they had made provisional agreements, and were ready practically to abide by the decision of the House of Commons if this matter was settled. The position this year was very different from what it was last year, as the outside authorities were substantially prepared to support the Second Reading of the Bill, with the idea that the matter should be properly considered in Committee. With regard to the question of arbitration, they suggested what they believed to be a fair proposal. Then, in regard to the outside area, they were in a more advanced position than last year. As to the question of the authority, the House would not bind itself by reading the Bill a Second time to any particular authority. All the Second Reading would mean was, that the House was in favour of dealing with the question by the purchase of the water companies. He submitted to the House a complete and definite scheme of purchase. If the Government were not prepared to accept the scheme of the Bill for the settlement of the question, he hoped they would introduce some other plan which would have immediate application, and not approve of any policy of delay, which would only increase the ultimate cost of the settlement of the question to the ratepayers, and probably do great damage to the efficiency of the water supply of London. [*Cheers.*]

*SIR F. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge) moved to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months." He said it was only on public grounds that he opposed the Measure. On the last occasion the question was before the House the Leader of the Opposition had suggested he was interested in the London water companies. He wished, therefore, to state distinctly that he did not hold a single debenture or a single share in the London water companies—["hear, hear!"]—and the only connection he had with them was, that he endeavoured to make them pay as much as possible to the Thames Conservancy. ["Hear, hear!"] He thought it was a pity that the London County Council should have disregarded the decision, averse from their scheme, which the House of Commons arrived at last year, in a full House and after prolonged debate. The London County Council had also brought in their Bills with a full knowledge of the fact that the Government were not favourable to their scheme. Lord James of Hereford had declared in the House of Lords last year, on the introduction of the Bill for creating a Metropolitan Home Counties Water Trust,

> "that it was not expedient to transfer to the London County Council the great business of administering the water supply, both within and without the Metropolis, as now furnished by the eight companies."

Then why had they brought in eight Bills when one Bill would have sufficed? He believed it was done in the hope that they would ultimately oust the water companies from their position by putting them to enormous costs. ["Hear, hear!"] It was indeed a monstrous thing that the water companies should be called upon year after year to defend, by means of the ratepayers' money, the rights given them by Parliament, when that money might be employed towards the reduction of the rates; and those rights had to be defended against a public body with an unlimited supply of public money. [*Cheers.*] He saw it stated that that body had spent £66,000 on Parliamentary proceedings during the last four years; and it was nothing less than a public scandal that the public, who held the shares of the water companies, should have, as ratepayers, to bear their share of that expenditure and have their dividends reduced in consequence of those proceedings. [*Cheers.*] It was stated in the Queen's Speech that the Government were going to deal with the London water question; and he thought it was the duty of the House to see that Measure, before it placed on the water companies the enormous cost of fighting the Bills of the London County Council before the Committees upstairs. But if, from any cause, the Government Measure were not brought in this Session, he had introduced a Bill which met the difficulties of the case without bringing in any fresh element of discord; and the London County Council had attempted to get that Bill disallowed on a technical point before the Standing Orders Committee. There were only two important reasons why any alteration in the present system of water supply in London should be made. The first was security against the chance of water famine in the future; and the second was economical management with a view to saving expense to the ratepayers and consumers. Neither of those points was met by the Bills of the London County Council. ["Hear, hear!"] They simply introduced new elements of discord in raising the question between the inner and the outer circles, and trampled upon private rights in a manner never dreamt of except by the London County Council. [*Cheers.*] In regard to his first point, the prevention of a water famine, no amalgamation of the undertakings was proposed, and there was no plan for making the water supply interchangeable, and, for all practicable purposes, the public would obtain no advantage by the purchase. Then, with regard to the question of economy, which, as it affected the ratepayers, ought to be the main consideration, he found, from a Parliamentary Return quoted in an article on the water supply of London and other large towns, in *The Times* of January 18th, that the working classes and water consumers occupying small houses paid a lower rate in London than in great towns where the municipality managed the supply. For houses of the rateable value of £10 the water rate was, in Birmingham, 10s.; in Manchester, 11s.; in Liverpool, 13s. 6d.; while in London it was only 9s. 9d.; [*Cheers.*] For £20 houses the water rate was, in Birmingham, £1 10s.; in Liverpool, £1 5s. 11d.; in Manchester, £1 1s.; in London, 19s. 7d. For £30 houses the rate was, in Birmingham, £2 10s.; in Liverpool, £1 17s. 2d.; in Manchester, £1 11s.; and in London, £1 9s. 8d. That showed that, in regard to water supply, the working classes were better off in London than in any provincial town. [*Cheers.*] Then there was the question of the purity of the water supply; and in regard to that important question purchase would place the consumers at a distinct disadvantage. The purity depended on filtering, which required constant care and watching. At present the officers had the fear of the County Council before their eyes. They knew they were supervised by a watchful and not too friendly critic. But if the supply was controlled by the London County Council, who would criticise them? [*Cheers.*] Then came the question of quantity. The companies were bound to supply sufficient quantity as well as quality; and there would have been no water famine in East London last summer were it not for the action of the London County Council. It certainly would be a singular action to take the control of those who knew and desired to do their duty, and give it to those who had prevented that duty being fulfilled. ["Hear, hear!"] But those eight Water Bills were not the whole story. What about the additional supply Bill of the London County Council? It might be said that it was dropped; but if that were so, what about the present proceedings of the London County Council? Did not they show that the London County Council still intended to persevere with their Welsh scheme? On the 5th February 1897 the Water Committee of the London County Council reported in favour of the continuance by the engineer of the surveys in relation to the Welsh scheme of supply, and the Water Committee recommended that, for that purpose, the services of Mr. Rumsby at a salary of £250 a year, and three other gentlemen at salaries of £200 a year each, should be retained until the 31st March 1898. Previous to that, on the 27th October 1896, notwithstanding the Report of the Royal Commission as to the quality of the water, the London County Council directed chemical examination of the water to be made for a period of six months, at a cost of £10 per week in order to prove that, notwithstanding that the water is constantly analysed on behalf of the Government by Dr. Frankland, that the water they propose to purchase at the cost of £40,000,000 is objectionable in quality, and must be superseded by a new source of supply. Now, what was the cost of this proposed second supply? According to the London County Council's own estimate, it was 55 millions—38 millions for cost of construction, 15 millions for storage, and two millions for expenses. As Chairman of the Thames Conservancy, he had naturally studied the subject very carefully, and he had no hesitation in saying that the whole supply necessary for London could easily be obtained, if it was taken at proper times and in a proper manner, from the Thames. The storage of the water in the reservoirs was the proper system to adopt. If it were taken from the Thames when the water was above a certain height no inconvenience would be caused; and as to its purity, the additional powers for purification given to the Conservancy by Parliament secured that water from the Thames was as pure as it could be found anywhere. The Chairman of the Water Committee of the London County Council, in a Report drawn up in 1894, estimated the financial cost of the purchase of the present water companies at 30 millions, and found that

> "to provide annual expenditure and repayment of capital, the present water rates, over the whole area of Water London, will have to be increased by at least 30 per cent."

And "the London ratepayer," added the Report,

> "may find that in a very few years he has to incur an expenditure of some £20,000,000, in abandoning altogether the Thames as a source of supply, and his rates will be raised in respect of this by a further sum of 6d. in the pound."

This was the London County Council's own estimate, which was not likely to be put too high; and all this enormous increase was to be undertaken simply to gratify the vanity of the London County Council, and this would be further indefinitely increased if the advocates of "free water" prevailed, in which case the whole cost would fall on the ratepayers; and he would like to know at what rate would the London County Council be able to borrow the £100,000,000 necessary to carry out this scheme? At present the charges of the water companies were statutory, and could not be increased; and any new works might diminish dividends. But there would be no limit to the charges which the London County Council might impose. Moreover, they would be bound to make provision for the redemption of capital, from which provision the companies were exempt. This gave a prospect of a 4d. rate for the old supply and another 4d. rate for the new supply, besides the 6d. in the pound for the Welsh scheme, and the ordinary rate increased by 30 per cent. Another important fact was that the dividends of the companies were limited to 10 per cent. Anything above that went in the reduction of the price of water. Four of the companies had reached the limit; three were on the verge of it, and only one was much below it. Therefore the consumers had a very valuable property in these companies, which would be totally lost if the County Councils bought the undertakings. The Bill, therefore, could not benefit the public either in greater certainty of supply or in economy; and although that should settle the question, there were further objections in respect of area and private rights. The area covered by the companies was 620 square miles. The area of the London County Council was only 122 square miles. London was nearly filled up, and its outside area was growing daily. The County of Middlesex—the most important of the areas surrounding London—was utterly and entirely opposed to this scheme in any shape or form. Unless absolutely compelled by Parliament, it would not consent to any arrangement whatever with the London County Council. The counties of Essex and Hertfordshire were also opposed to the scheme. To get over the difficulty, an attempt had been made this year to bribe the outside areas, but the more the scheme was looked into the less it would be found to bear discussion. The offer to give a proportion of the water to the outside districts was utterly unworkable, and would be a glaring disadvantage to both parties; and as far as the district authorities were concerned, some of the provisions of the Bill were inconsistent with the powers conferred on them by the Public Health Act 1875. But the result of the Bill, if carried, instead of promoting amalgamation, would be that instead of eight water authorities there would be 30 or 40 all round London. That might be a pleasent prospect for engineers and secretaries, but it would be decidedly bad for the public. Lastly, as to the position of the debenture and shareholders. The scheme of the Bill was to give the London County Council possession of the works and books, accounts and documents of the company on three months' notice, expiring in March 1898, or March 1899, at the option of the Council, quite irrespective of whether the purchase money had then been paid or even arrived at. The proposal that a notice should have the effect of vesting property was not only fundamentally opposed to the provisions of the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act, which required payment to be made or secured before possession was given, but was also contrary to the elementary principles of justice. Let the House imagine a vendor going to arbitration when his property, books, accounts, and documents were in the custody of his opponents. But that was not all. These Bills not only dealt inadequately with the case of officers and servants, but obliged them to enter into the service of the purchasers before the purchase was complete; so that possibly they would have to apply their energies in counteracting the claims of their old employers to honest compensation. As to the question of arbitration, the hon. Member who moved the Bill admitted that the principle of 1895 was improper, but he would not then undertake to withdraw it. Now the County Council and each company might agree on a single arbitrator, or each side might appoint one, and a third might be added by the High Court. These three arbitrators were to sit together. No umpire was appointed, so the award must be unanimous. If the arbitrators were not unanimous, a lengthy and ruinous arbitration would be simply wasted. But if the arbitrators agreed, why were they not to act under the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act, under which all railway and other companies had acquired their property? The Act had stood the test of 50 years, and had proved sufficient for the transfer of 100 millions' worth of property. The hon. Member for Poplar had explained that it was not fair to give the companies the 10 per cent. compensation given to private people whose property was taken. The shareholders of the companies were private persons. Why should they not have their full rights?

*Mr. BUXTON: I said that there was a material difference. In one case a private individual is dispossessed of his house or land and is put to some considerable inconvenience; and it is recognised by custom that such a case is entitled to compensation. But in the other case—that of the shareholder—so long as he has full compensation for the value of his shares, there can be no claim for sentimental or material injury.

*Sir F. DIXON-HARTLAND said that the Lands Clauses Consolidation Acts were employed when the purchase of the water companies of Liverpool, Birmingham, Northampton, Lincoln, Wolverhampton, and Middlesbrough was carried through; and when these Bills were last discussed, on March 25 1896, the President of the Local Government Board and the Colonial Secretary were very strong on the question. But in what position does this Bill leave the unfortunate debenture and shareholders? The London County Council had been advised that the arbitrations might last for several years, and, in the meanwhile, the shareholders were not empowered to transfer their holdings. Thus the market value of perhaps 40 millions of property would for years be unsaleable. And these shares, be it remembered, were largly held by the poor people of this country. ["Oh!"] The debenture stock is a trustee stock, of which its security will be absolutely taken away, as not only its interest, but the shareholders will only be entitled to dividend so far as either the London County Council or outside authorities may carry on the various undertakings so as to yield a profit, and there is no provision to oblige them to continue them at all. The fact was, what the London County Council called equitable treatment, was regarded by plain folks as barefaced robbery. He hoped the House would reject a Measure which was unfair to the consumers, unfair to the ratepayers, unfair to the companies, and unfair to the outer areas alike.

MR. W. R. BOUSFIELD (Hackney, N.), in seconding the Amendment, said that, apart from the question of the County Council being the water authority, he was very much in agreement with those who desired that this matter should be speedily dealt with, and he adopted to a considerable extent the arguments of the hon. Member for Poplar. For instance, he agreed that the management of the water supply of the metropolis should be in the hands of a representative authority—[*Ministerial cheers*]—that the differences in different parts of London required to be equalised, alike in regard to charges and the supply per head of the population, and also as to the urgency of the question. He regarded it as a matter of the greatest urgency that the question should be promptly dealt with, and they had reason to believe that the Government itself shared that view. If he and others on the Ministerial side had reason to believe that the Government took that view, they would, notwithstanding their great objection to the County Council being the water authority, have been prepared to support the Second Reading of those Bills. [*Ministerial cheers and cries of* "No, no!"] He desired it to be understood that he had not the slightest objection to the London County Council as a council. It was quite true the present constitution of that body did not entirely please him, but he had never railed at it; it was the creation of their own Party, and he had sufficient confidence in the ratepayers of London to believe that they were perfectly capable of electing a County Council thoroughly competent to discharge the municipal business of the metropolis. The question of areas, in his opinion, was still a dominant factor in the situation. Notwithstanding the fact that certain agreements had been come to as between the County Council and bodies outside, it hardly required an argument to show that it would be absurd to allow the London County Council, which only represents 120 square miles, to control the water supply of an area of 620 square miles. He had never seen those agreements; was the hon. Member for Poplar prepared to make one of them public?

*MR. BUXTON: If the Bill passes Second Reading, the agreements would go before the Committee in due form. [*A laugh.*]

MR. BOUSFIELD pointed out that a knowledge of the provisions of those agreements was of enormous importance at the present stage. Unless one knew the principle on which the whole of the undertaking was to be divided between the central and the outside areas, it was obvious, injustice might be done to the citizens of London. He wanted to know what the outside authorities were prepared to pay for the share they would have in the undertakings upon the basis of their prospective value. Unless the

County of London was to be treated on that basis, it would be far better to go, not for purchase, but simply for control.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. HENRY CHAPLIN, Lincolnshire, Sleaford), who was received with Ministerial cheers, said that it would be for the convenience of the House, and would probably save time, if he stated the course which the Government intended to take upon the Motion before the House. The position of the London water question, in one respect at all events, appeared to him to have considerably changed from what it was a year or more ago. The hon. Gentleman deprecated further delay, and pressed upon the House the extreme urgency of the question, and in one sense, no doubt, his statement was justified. The recurrence of a water famine in two successive years in the East End of London, following as it did failures in supply in other parts of London in consequence of prolonged frost, undoubtedly did bring home to the minds of water consumers in London in the most unpleasant manner the importance of this question to them, and these occurrences gave rise to demands, sometimes very exigent, for legislation that would prevent a repetition of these failures in future. He sympathised entirely with that demand and assured the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down that the Government were endeavouring by every means in their power to meet it. It was right the House should be reminded of what it was that led to the water famine in 1896. There was no escape from the conclusion that the famines that occurred in the East End of London were caused by the want of sufficient storage for the water supply of the East London Company, and that insufficiency of storage power was due to the action of the London County Council in the year 1893. ["Hear, hear!"] The East London Company, who had foreseen the necessity for making further application for storage, and were prepared to do so, in that year introduced a Bill for the purpose. But that Bill was opposed with all the power they could bring against it by the London County Council, and, although they were warned of the danger of their course, and although it was pointed out to them by no less an authority than the Chairman of Committees that they would incur great responsibility, the County Council insisted on throwing out the Bill. ["Hear, hear!"] Again, in 1894, the East London Company in the fulfilment of its duty came before Parliament with another Bill on the subject, and again it was opposed by the London County Council, and not only by the Council, but by the President of the Local Government Board at the time—Mr. Shaw Lefevre. ["Hear, hear!"] On that occasion, however, happily the London County Council and the President of the Local Government Board were defeated, though only by a majority of one. ["Hear, hear!"] If the Bill had been defeated on that occasion he trembled to think what might have been the consequences to the inhabitants of the east of London last year. ["Hear!"] The happy consequence of the defeat of the Council was that to-day the position was altogether different, for the works contemplated in that Bill had been rapidly proceeded with, and he was informed that in a few weeks from now the works would be completed, and when completed the storage power of the company would be absolutely doubled. ["Hear, hear!"] Prior to March 1896 the East London Company possessed reservoirs to store 600,000,000 gallons. At the commencement of this year they had, as a consequence of the Bill which had been so bitterly opposed by the Council, increased the storage to 1,000 million gallons, and within the next few weeks the storage will be increased to 1,200 million gallons. ["Hear, hear!"] As the result, he was told that anything in the nature of a recurrence of a water famine became exceedingly remote. That was not all. Another Bill was brought forward by the same company only the other day for the purpose of still further increasing the storage power, and that Bill had been read, he was glad to say, a Second time, and would, he hoped, become law at no distant date. Under this the storage power of the East London Company would be increased to nearly 2,500 million gallons. Under such circumstances, it might be said apprehension of a recurrence of a water famine disappeared. He mentioned these facts to the House, not because he desired in any way to minimise the importance of the subject, but because he thought it was only right and due to the House that it should be placed in possession of the information he had on the subject, for it might be a factor of some importance in determining the decision on the present occasion. With regard to the Bill which the hon. Member had asked the House to read a Second time, the policy of the County Council, so far as he could gather from the speech of the hon. Member, appeared to be as follows. They were to acquire the property by purchase of eight different London water companies, subject, however, to agreements which he understood had been made with the representatives of all but one of the water areas outside the jurisdiction of the County Council. There appeared to be some difference of opinion on that point with hon. Members behind him.

Colonel LOCKWOOD explained that he had consulted the Essex authorities and found that, though technically right, the hon. Member was practically wrong.

Mr. CHAPLIN said the effect of these agreements appeared to be this. While the County Council would maintain and control the supply within the limits of their jurisdiction, and also that of the areas with which no agreements had been made, yet the supply within the other areas in respect to which agreements would be made would be managed and controlled by the authorities who represented them. So far as he knew, it had been the object of all parties in the House to have one area for London; but under this Bill there would be a number of areas and a number of different authorities all severed from each other. The policy of the County Council, in fact, as between its own area and the areas outside seemed to be a policy of severance and separation. So far as he had any knowledge of the subject this was a new departure—["No, no!"]—an entirely new solution of the water difficulty of London. Although, undoubtedly, it was a possible principle that representative authorities should be invested with the control of their own water supply, if it could be shown that the proposals were businesslike and practicable, it was unfortunately alleged by competent authorities that the proposal was open to two of the greatest possible objections. It was contended by many authorities on the subject, first, that this was not a practicable scheme, and, secondly, it was urged that it would be most injurious to the ratepayers, and particularly to those within the limits of the jurisdiction of the County Council. With reference to the first difficulty, it was urged that the mere physical difficulty of separating all these sources of supply, the mains, the pipes, and the whole machinery of distribution, would be enormous and expensive, and when the great number of different authorities were taken into account, all of whom would have to be dealt with, he was told the scheme would end in a chaos of confusion. Such was the objection taken to the first part of the proposal. Secondly, it had been pointed out that the burden on London ratepayers would be increased, because only the outside areas would have an opportunity of reaping any increase in returns from the increased consumption of water by a rapidly-growing population. He owned that these were objections of great importance, and it was manifest, he thought, that before they gave their sanction to any of these proposals they must be carefully examined and cleared up. They were told that the promoters were perfectly agreed, and that a committee was the proper tribunal. He had considered the matter, and there were objections which he desired to point out to the House. Who were the parties to appear before the Committee? They had the companies on the one hand, as a matter of course, and on the other the representatives of the County Council and the outside areas. How, under the circumstances, the interests of the ratepayers were to be represented he did not see. [*Cheers.*] Of course that House might give them a *locus standi*, but the ratepayers would have to do it at their own cost, at an expense which no private individual ought to be expected to incur; it was notorious that in the County Council itself there was the widest difference of opinion, and although the decision to proceed with these Bills was taken by a small majority, there was a powerful opposition. It would be impossible for that powerful opposition to be heard before the Committee. Quite apart from this, there were wider and broader questions to be considered which they would have to consider. Let them reflect on the object which they ought to have in view in dealing with the companies. First there was the point that the water to be supplied was of proper quality; the second was whether it was of adequate quantity, and that a failure of supply should be rendered as far as possible impossible. The third point was that it should be supplied as cheaply as possible to the ratepayers. The hon. Member who moved the Second Reading objected to the present quality of the water on the ground that it varied very considerably, and he also said that the wealthier part of London was charged more cheaply than other parts. On that point he was emphatically contradicted, and with regard to the quality the Commissioners reported:—

> "We are strongly of opinion that the water supplied to the consumer in London is of a very high standard of excellence and purity and suitable for all household purposes."

["Hear, hear!"] There was no reservation with that statement.

*Mr. BUXTON said he had no intention of saying that the water generally was impure.

Mr. CHAPLIN said, with regard to the quantity of water, Lord Balfour's Commission stated that from the existing sources there was available 35 gallons per diem for a population of 12 millions of people. As to the third condition, cheapness, he would be a bold man who would be prepared to say that the policy of purchase would be an economical policy in the interest of the ratepayers. ["Hear, hear!"] He had a very shrewd suspicion that the very opposite would be the case if the policy of purchase were carried out. Before they gave their sanction to purchase there must be an inquiry into different matters, such as what would be the financial result to the ratepayers. On this point they were almost completely in the dark. Then, should there be one area and one authority, or more than one? In particular, was this policy of severance and separation practicable and feasible? It must be remembered that there were two main lines of policy. There was the policy of acquisition on the one hand, and there was the policy of control on the other. They might consider as to the last-named whether additional control over the companies could be exercised with advantage. Another matter of importance was how far it was practicable to connect together any two or more of the water systems, and in that way obviate the danger of any water famine in the future. What the Government proposed to do was to oppose the Second Reading of the Bills—[*cheers*] and if the Bills should be defeated, then they should appoint a Royal Commission—[*ironical cheers*]—to carry out the inquiry into the matters he had indicated. They thought the Commission should be a small one, and as to the precise terms of reference, he should be prepared to place them before the House shortly. This Commission, he thought, might report in a reasonable time. Meanwhile, they thought that something might be done by the introduction of a Measure this Session to strengthen and improve the position of the water consumers in the metropolis. It had been a common cause of complaint on any failure to fulfil their obligations on the part of the companies that it was extremely difficult and sometimes impossible for the water consumer to get adequate redress. They thought if means were given to the aggrieved consumer for obtaining redress more easily than at present, that would be a great advantage and boon to him pending the inquiry. He could not then give the details of the methods they proposed to adopt, because to do so at that moment would be out of order, but they proposed to lay them before that House shortly. He had indicated to the best of his ability the alternatives which the Government intended to propose to the Second Reading of the Bills, and he could assure the hon. Gentleman opposite that, in opposing these Bills, he was actuated by no spirit of animosity towards the London County Council. ["Hear, hear!"] What the cost of carrying out the proposals contained in the Bills would be to the ratepayers of the metropolis he could not say, but he had heard it stated that night by his hon. Friend behind him that if the London County Council were to attempt to carry them out they would be embarking upon an expenditure of between £70,000,000 and £100,000,000 of money. That would necessarily cast an enormous additional burden upon the ratepayers, and such a burden ought not to be imposed upon them without a careful inquiry by a tribunal before whom those representing the ratepayers might be heard. For the reasons he had given, although he greatly regretted that he should now, for the second time within a short period, have been brought into conflict with the London County Council, he felt that he had no alternative but to oppose the Second Reading of these Bills. ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) said that he had heard with much regret that the Government intended to throw out these Bills. To refer this question to a Royal Commission for further inquiry would be to hang it up for a considerable time, while it would undoubtedly strengthen the position of the London water companies against the public. He was surprised, and much regretted, that the Government should now propose to do over again what had already been done. He, however, could scarcely wonder at the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman to refer this question to a Royal Commission when he remembered that in the earlier part of his speech the right hon. Gentleman had asserted that the proposals made by the London County Council in these Bills were absolutely new. The right hon. Gentleman was entirely mistaken in that assumption. ["Hear, hear!"] During the last 15 years the London water question had been inquired into by commissions and committees of all kinds, and only recently, in 1891, the question had been considered in all its aspects by one of the most important Committees of that House that had ever sat, and which had been presided over by the right hon. Gentleman the present Home Secretary. That Committee went into precisely the question into which the right hon. Gentleman now proposed that inquiry should be made, and it was upon the Report of that Committee and of another Committee that the present Bills were founded. ["Hear, hear!"] The arbitration clause was specially based upon the Report of those Committees. Whatever faults might be found in these Bills might easily be pointed out before the Committee upstairs, and be dealt with by them in the event of the Bills being read a Second time. Having framed their Bills upon the recommendations in the Reports of those Committees, what was the next proper step for the London County Council to take? It was to lay those Bills before the House of Commons, a course which they were then taking. In his view, in the circumstances of the case, the Government ought to permit these Bills to be read a Second time in order that they might be sent before a Committee upstairs, who could examine into the proposals embodied in them and see how far they would operate for the benefit of the public. The right hon. Gentleman had said that the ratepayers of London and of the outlying areas ought to be heard before Committee. Was there ever such an extraordinary statement made before? Surely the London County Council were the representatives of the London ratepayers, and were the only persons who ought to be heard on their behalf. ["Hear, hear!"] Had private individuals been heard in the case of the Bill for the supply of water to Birmingham? Certainly not. It was only the Town Council and the County Council that were heard as the representatives of the ratepayers. He submitted that it would be idle to refer all the questions relating to the London water supply, that had been inquired into over and over again, to a Royal Commission, who would have to go over all the ground again. Why should that House follow the Report of a Royal Commission if they were going to disregard the reports of their own Committees which had been appointed by their predecessors? A Royal Commission would have no better means of investigating the circumstances, and could have no better sources of information than the Committees of that House had had, or than a Committee of that House would have if the Bills were read a Second time. ["Hear, hear!"] The right hon. Gentleman had said that it was necessary to inquire how the proposals in that Bill would affect the ratepayers financially. That would entirely depend upon how much the London County Council were going to give the water companies for their undertakings, and who was to manage those undertakings when the purchase had been effected. No one could so well decide how much should be given for the undertakings as a Committee of that House, and it would be for the ratepayers to determine how the undertakings should be managed. Now that the fate of the Bills was sealed, he did not think that it would be worth while to discuss the details of the proposals which they contained. It had been stated that the actual charge for water was less in other places than it was in London. In Birmingham the charge for a £37 10s. house was £2 17s.

*Sir F. DIXON-HARTLAND: I beg the hon. Member's pardon. I mentioned the small houses of £10, £20, and £30 a year.

Mr. STUART said that when a comparison was made between London and Birmingham, it was necessary to say with what company in London the comparison was made, because the charges of some companies in London were practically double those of others. He would like to point out that one or two mistakes had been made in this discussion. It had been said that 30 or 40 authorities were to be established under the Bill. That was not so. There would only be 7 or 8. In the next place they had been told that 55 millions of money was to be spent by the County Council on some Welsh scheme. That sum was erroneous. It would be nothing like it. But that did not affect the question of purchase, because if water was required from a distance, that was a question of fact the House would have to determine whatever was done on the present Bill; and whether it was the County Council or the companies who had to get water from a distance, it would have in the circumstances identically the same effect, namely, that the people who got the water would have to pay for it. The statement had been made that the County Council were constantly harassing the water companies—["hear, hear"]—and that they had spent £66,000 in Parliamentary work. He had no doubt that figure was correct, though he had no means of verifying it; but he would like to point out that this was only the second time they had introduced a Purchase Bill. ["Hear, hear!"] All their other business with water companies had consisted in criticising and dealing with their Bills and in almost every case, he thought he might say in all cases, when those Bills had come before a Committee, they had carried the demands they had made—["hear, hear!"]—and in doing so, they had saved the people of London an enormous amount of money. Last year he sat on a Committee which worked long and laboriously, and that Committee was convinced that water concessions would have to be made. They reported to the House pointing out how bad it was for London that the present position should continue, and they showed the positions of water companies with reference to purchase, and expressed the hope that the question might be fairly settled. That was because they were conscious that large concessions would have to be made, and if they were to be made to private companies at this stage, their effect on the price that would have to be paid for the present undertakings, let alone any further undertakings, as improved by them, was certainly a very serious item for consideration. ["Hear, hear!"] The result of that night's Debate and of the resolution of the Government would be to add many millions to the sum which London would have to give for these undertakings in the future. He could only beg the House to support the Council in the division on this Bill, and he hoped that those Members on the Unionist side who so disliked the County Council, might still come round to vote for the Bill. He was convinced that the House would find no other authority except the County Council possible. ["Hear, hear!"] It was but beating the air to imagine that any authority but the existing representative authorities, who were concerned in their own localities, could be created. ["Hear, hear!"]

*Sir JOHN LUBBOCK (London University) thought he would be expressing the feeling of the majority of London Members when he said that they had heard with much satisfaction the statement of the President of the Local Government Board. The result of the discussion, instead of taking millions of money out of the pockets of the London ratepayers, would, in his opinion, save them from a very heavy loss. As a general principle it was most undesirable that local authorities or governments should undertake great commercial transactions or become great employers of labour, and those who wished them to do so were bound to prove their case. The hon. Member for the Hoxton Division of Shoreditch, and the supporters of these Bills, had not given any sufficient reason for embarking upon this gigantic speculation. ["Hear, hear!"] The House would probably be of opinion that, as a rule, municipalities should not enter into business or commercial transactions, and that it was also undesirable that they should become great employers of labour. The question then arose whether there were any special circumstances which rendered the purchase of the water companies desirable. He thought, on the contrary, there were special reasons which justified them in asking the House to throw out these Bills. He did not oppose them from any jealousy of the London County

Council. On the contrary, if purchase was carried out, they must, he thought, have the control, or, at any rate, a preponderating voice. They had, however, already very heavy duties, and no special acquaintance with the subject. Nor was he opposing the Bills in the interests of the water companies; he was not a shareholder in any of them, and he was speaking entirely in the interests of the ratepayers. Other cities might or might not have been wise to acquire their water supply, but every case must be examined on its own basis. Now, in the case of London all the companies, with possibly one exception, were limited to a maximum dividend of 10 per cent., and this was generally obtained, or very nearly so. Moreover, in the Metropolis they were face to face with the necessity of either having to go to a distance for a large additional water supply, or of spending several millions sterling on storage reservoirs in the Thames valley. This was not so much owing to the fact that more water was required, as because the difficulty of maintaining the purity was becoming greater and greater with the continually increasing population in the Thames and Lea valleys. If the municipality did not buy up the water companies, the duty and expense of obtaining the new supply would fall upon the companies. On the other hand, if they were bought up by the London County Council, then the additional burden would fall upon the rates. It was sometimes said that the water companies ought to be bought up because water was a necessity of life; but so was bread, and so were many other things; and the point was whether their water supply, in the hands of the water companies, was as large and as pure as it was likely to be in the hands of the London County Council. The difficulty of maintaining the purity was very considerable, and very careful filtering was necessary. The present filtering was conducted by the water companies, and was carefully watched by the officials of the London County Council. But if the London County Council became the owner of the water supply, who would there be to watch over that body? ["Hear, hear!"] So far as purity was concerned, therefore, the argument was rather against than in favour of purchase. Passing to the financial aspect of the question, he said those who advocated purchase did so no doubt under the belief that they would get their water cheaper. He did not believe this. He would ask the House, for instance, to consider what would be the effect to the ratepayers of buying up the West Middlesex Company. It was limited to a maximum dividend of 10 per cent.; everything over and above that must go in reduction of the price of water. The company was now paying a 10 per cent. dividend, and had already reduced the price of water to its consumers. If, therefore, the circumstances of the company improved that would not increase the dividends of the shareholders, but would reduce the price charged to the water consumers. On the contrary, if the company were compelled to undergo large expenditure, the burden would fall not upon the ratepayers, but upon the shareholders. If, however, they bought up the West Middlesex Company, then, if the profits increased they would gain nothing more than under the present system; while, on the other hand, they would be in a worse position if there were increased expenses. Moreover, if the companies were bought up the persent ratepayers would not only have to pay for the water, but for the amortisation of the stock. The longest time allowed by Parliament to the London County Council, even in the case of purchase of freehold land, was 60 years, and if the London County Council had to amortise the stock within 60 years, it was evident there would be a heavy additional burden on the present ratepayers. Those who had not gone thoroughly into the question were dazzled by the 10 per cent. dividends paid by the companies; but, of course, the purchase of the West Middlesex and the other companies would have to be on the basis of the present profits, and anyone who looked at the figures would see that those who purchased water companies' stocks and debentures at present prices could only obtain two and three-quarters or three per cent. for their money. It was true that the London County Council could borrow at two-and-a-half per cent., but adding on the expenses of management, etc., the price came to about £2 17s. 6d., so that the margin was extremely small. Moreover, there are other objections to the Bills now before the House. In the first place they effected no consolidation, because while, on the one hand, they abolished the eight water companies, on the other hand, they created more than eight water authorities. Moreover, as the mains were now laid with reference to the boundaries of the companies, they would have to be rearranged with reference to the boundaries of the local authorities, which would involve a very heavy expense. ["Hear, hear!"] Then, again, the London County Council had made an arrangement with Surrey, and, he believed, with some of the other counties, in which they gave them the option of purchase for two years after the price was fixed. This, he maintained, was a very one-sided bargain for the people of London, because if the purchase were a good one, the outside areas would take the advantage of it; while if the price paid were too large, the outside areas would throw the whole burden upon the ratepayers of London. He asked the House therefore to throw out these Bills, though he did not say that matters should be allowed to remain as they now were. He suggested, in the first place, a careful inquiry as to the probable financial effects of purchase; secondly, a London Water Commission should be constituted, with powers, *mutatis mutandis*, similar to those of the Railway Commission. Such a commission would act as a court of appeal between individual consumers and the companies, and would deal with any questions of doubtful or illegal charges, or other complaints, which it was difficult or impossible for an individual to press with effect or success. There was, however, another point which was important to watch in the interests of the ratepayers—namely, that of unnecessary or wasteful expenditure, extravagant salaries or wages. These could not be dealt with by an outside body; therefore, it seemed to be necessary, in the third place, to place on the board of each company representatives of the ratepayers, to watch and protect their interests, as was done in the Indian railway companies and other cases; and fourthly, to limit the right to make back dividends within reasonable limits, as had been done with the gas companies, in which case it was fixed at six years. In this way the question of price did not arise. The companies would be left with their present responsibilities, and all conflict with the outside authorities would be avoided. It had been said that the representatives of the ratepayers might be in a minority on the Board, but the other directors would have no different interests; and if the directors representing the public had any reason to complain, Parliament would no doubt intervene. He firmly believed that the effect of purchase would be substantially to raise their rates for many years to come. It was a gigantic speculation, and one undertaken moreover with very little consideration. On the other hand, under the system of control, which he suggested as an alternative, they would avoid all risk, and at once, or almost at once, secure a reduction of the water rate. [*Cheers.*]

*SIR SAMUEL MONTAGU (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel) said that he desired to support the Bill. He wished to correct a statement made by the right hon. Baronet, as to the financial policy he had put forward. The right hon. Gentleman thought that, by doubling the debt of London, they would lower the price or raise the interest. But the right hon. Gentleman had lost sight of the fact that they would not be creating any fresh debt. The people would only part with their shares against Metropolitan Consols or cash to be re-invested; it was a kind of conversion, which would not affect the price of the new security. The trustees who held water stock would take the new stock. The people who could get the money by buying out the companies were the very people who would invest in the stock of the County Council. He believed that, if his constituents were polled, they would be in favour of this monopoly being taken out of the hands of private companies. Their sufferings had been too severe to be readily forgotten. The heat of last summer and the cold of the previous winter alike diminished the water supply, yet the ratepayers had to pay the full water rates for which they were liable. The President of the Local Government Board spoke of the enormous extension of storage which would prevent any deprivation of water; but storage did not affect the winter supply in time of frost. Besides, the residents in the East End of London believed that the mains were not placed at a proper depth to prevent freezing during a severe winter. His constituents also believed that the water from the Lea was not always of the purest quality, or that the quantity was sufficient for the requirements of the increasing population of the district. The important question was whether they were to promptly acquire this monopoly from the companies at a fair price; and secondly, whether the County Council should be the controlling water authority. He maintained that the financial operation must be of advantage to the ratepayers, because in no conceivable circumstance would any arbitrator in the case of an industrial undertaking with varying dividends give compensation, or a price on a basis to yield only $2\frac{1}{2}$ or $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. The arrangement would, therefore, be beneficial to the ratepayer, while there would be a saving, through consolidating the administration of the different companies, in directors' fees and in the salaries of officials; and that seemed to him to be the main argument for amalgamating the companies. They got all these advantages, whatever the controlling power might be. The majority of the County Council was willing to undertake the work, and he maintained that they ought to trust the County Council to make the experiment. If the Council were overweorked let it come to Parliament and have the franchise increased. This would be a better alternative than to leave this monopoly of a necessary of life in the hands of the companies.

*Mr. WHITMORE (Chelsea) joined issue with the hon. Member who had suggested that the ratepayers of London should allow a bare majority of the County Council to make an experiment in the management of this great business of water supply. Was the House prepared to do that? What was the County Council? The hon. Member practically admitted that the present body was overworked.

*Sir S. MONTAGU: I did not say one way or the other.

*Mr. WHITMORE said the hon. Gentleman suggested that the present members were insufficient to carry on the work of the County Council, and he inferred from that that he was in favour of increasing their numbers.

*Sir S. MONTAGU had no knowledge whatsoever of the work of the County Council, and in his observations he was only answering arguments which had been put forward.

*Mr. WHITMORE said that, as one who had some slight knowledge on the subject, he might inform and enlighten the hon. Gentleman on that not unimportant part of what ought to be the knowledge of a London representative. The London County Council was at the present moment undoubtedly overworked. He had never said a word in disrespect of the London County Council as an institution, always wishing it to be entirely independent of politics, but hon. Members on both sides of the House who knew anything of its workings must admit that it was a body saturated with Party spirit. ["Hear, hear!"] Was there any sign that that Party spirit was likely to diminish in the future? Did hon. Members really think that a body so political and partisan could properly and fairly, and in a businesslike way, discharge the great proposed addition of duty which would be entailed by making it responsible for the water supply of London? ["Hear, hear!"] As a proof of the extent to which the Council had become a political body, he pointed to the bye-elections at Haggerston and Whitechapel, where gentlemen had, he said, been selected as candidates on both sides, not because of their connection with the localities, or of any knowledge of municipal affairs, but because of their politics, and who obviously desired to make the County Council a stepping stone to something else. Let him give another illustration. He did not suppose there was another administrative body in England which would, like the County Council did two days ago, have deliberately selected the less worthy of two candidates for the chair.

*Mr. SPEAKER reminded the hon. Member that he was travelling from the question.

*Mr. WHITMORE observed that his object was to point out that the County Council was saturated by Party spirit, and that Members of that House as representing the ratepayers of London would make a great mistake if they added to its functions the great business of managing the water supply of London. For his part he rejoiced that the Government were going to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the many questions affecting the management and supply of water in London. ["Hear, hear!"] He did not agree that by so doing they were going to hang up the matter. He believed and hoped that that Commission would make its Report in a reasonable time, say, within the limits of one year, and those of them who were now gladly assenting to the appointment of such Commission did so in the clear hope and on the clear understanding that it would be appointed without delay, its labours conducted with every expedition, and its Report, if possible, presented within the compass of a year. There were real reasons why a new Commission should be appointed, as he conditions had vitally altered since the last Royal Commission sat, and it was also important to know approximately what was likely to be the amount of money which under a policy of purchase they should have to pay. When Lord Cross, in 1880, mentioned a definite sum London unanimously scouted the idea of giving any such sum as that then named for the purchase of the water companies. But that was the only definite sum that ever had been named for their purchase. He had always opposed the policy of purchase in the dark, and had always been anxious that they should not embark on any such policy without further inquiry. He was glad that the Government had taken the course which had been announced by the President of the Local Government Board, which he was sure would have a good result, and which, he hoped, would lead to the adoption of remedies for all the real and practical grievances under which ratepayers and consumers of water in London might now suffer. ["Hear, hear!"]

*MR. CHARLES HARRISON (Plymouth) said he was not going to follow the hon. Member for Chelsea by entering upon all the topics in his speech, but must mention that the present candidate for Whitechapel was for three years a member of the London County Council and a Member of this House, and was connected with the constituency he was seeking to represent on the Council. It had been urged during this Debate that the London County Council ought not to be allowed, as the municipal authority, to purchase under these Bills the water undertakings of the metropolis; and one of the arguments used, was their conduct in reference to the East London Water Bill of 1893, in causing its rejection, with the result that the water famine was produced, owing to the reservoirs not having been allowed to be constructed by reason of the rejection of the Bill of 1893. As a matter of fact the works were authorised by the Bill of the next year, and there was but one year's delay. To this day the reservoirs and works were not completed so as to be in operation, three years and upwards after the passing of the Act. But the water famine occurred before three years expired from the year 1893, and, therefore, even if the Bill had passed in 1893, the water famine would have occurred all the same, and it had no relation or connection whatever with the rejection of the Bill of 1893. But these were small matters in comparison with the great question of whether the London County Council was to be allowed, as every other municipality was allowed, to be the purchaser under these Bills of its water undertakings. Whatever might be the views of the President of the Local Government Board, and of the Government at the present time, the President of the Board of Trade, in 1891, then the President of the Local Government Board said, during the discussion of the Water Commission Bill:—

> "The London County Council had had imposed upon it all at once a very difficult task, and no doubt it had made some mistakes; but, nevertheless, he had perfect confidence that the London County Council, if entrusted with the water supply of the Metropolis, would perform its task ably and well, and without a particle of anything approaching jobbery."

[*Cheers.*] Now the Government said that they had not sufficient information, and desired, before allowing these Bills to proceed, to have advice about financial results, and particularly as regarded the outlying areas—and their relations to the central authority. But all this had been fully inquired into and settled by the Select Committee, presided over by the present Home Secretary, which sat in 1891. It was the contention put forward by the local authorities outside the metropolis, during that inquiry, and on the contest of the Purchase Bills promoted by the Council in 1895, that the portion of the works and a sufficient supply outside the metropolis should be handed over to the local authority. In fact, this was the only solution, because the physical conditions of the company's works lent themselves to the working out this conclusion. Five of the water companies drew water from the Thames, and three from other sources; but the system of each company was complete in itself. For instance, in the case of the Chelsea Water undertaking, the Purchase Bill of which undertaking was now under discussion, that undertaking had no outside area, and was not empowered to supply an outside area. Yet, could it be said that that undertaking was not complete. Each of the systems was complete. Each is physically independent of the other, both as regards supply and distribution. No one company does the work of distribution for or on behalf of another company. Each company has its own separate works, its own reservoirs, its own filter beds, its own pumping works—even its own internal system of distribution so as to admit of internal division into complete sectional systems. Each company has its own statutory and different standard of water tax, ranging from 7½ per cent. to 4 per cent. Each has its separate and varying obligations as regards height of supply. Each internal section of each company is as complete as any system supplying any provincial town. There was no difficulty at all in separating them, both as regarded the inside area and the area outside the county. The boundary lines or limits of distribution of each and every one of the companies were fixed without any relation to any supposed settlement of future populations, or to any special fact founded on their retention as water areas for all time. They were areas fixed as matter of accident. The local authorities had taken up that position, and had produced evidence to that effect in the inquiry in 1891, and it was now well established; so much so, that arrangements had been made as regarded the whole of the water area south of the Thames. There was no physical connection as regarded engineering or anything else between the north and the south of the Thames. As regarded the whole of the southern area, which involved half the water questions of London, arrangements had been made, and if the local authorities were satisfied with the partition, it was clear that it could be carried out. If the inquiries and subjects were re-opened the purchase of these corporate undertakings would be postponed for an indefinite period. The subject had been thoroughly investigated, and there was no reason why the Bill before the House, the subject of those investigations, should not be read a Second time and sent to a Committee upstairs, and not postponed until the Royal Commission had satisfied themselves by further inquiry.

*Mr. G. B. HUDSON (Herts, Hitchin) remarked that there was already a great scarcity of water in Hertfordshire, and the people there regarded with the greatest apprehension the scheme of the London County Council to draw upon their supplies. The county he represented was now drawn upon for water chiefly by the New River Company and the East London Water Company. They, however, only supplied limited areas. The water from the chalk was of exceptional purity, and that was why the London County Council wanted it. The Royal Commission on the London Water Supply reported three years ago that 40 million gallons more daily might be taken from the wells in the Lea Valley. Within 12 months after that Report was published the East London Waterworks Company shut off their mains nightly to save a few million gallons daily, because they said the river Lea had failed to give an adequate supply. In the twenty-fifth Annual Report to the Local Government Board on the London Water Supply for 1895-6 it was stated that 20 million gallons daily had been drawn from the springs and wells in the Lea Valley. But if the London County Council obtained possession, with their professed policy of giving up the Thames and Lea, they would draw 60 million gallons daily from Hertfordshire, and the county would become a desert and uninhabitable. [*Laughter.*] No company had a right to deprive them of the necessaries of life, or appropriate what did not belong to them, merely to swell their attenuated dividends. The water companies ought not to be allowed to exercise their common law rights as private individuals, but should obtain permission from Parliament each time they wished to sink fresh wells. They would then know where they were. [*Laughter.*] At present they did not know where they were —[*laughter*]—as fresh wells were being sunk in secret on portions of land recently purchased by the companies in the Lea Valley. There was no guarantee in these Bills that more wells would not be sunk by the London County Council. He was grateful to the Government for opposing these Bills, and he hoped they would avert the danger the county of Hertford was in of a diminution of its water supply. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. E. H. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.), who was met with Ministerial cries of "Divide," said if hon. Members on the Ministerial Benches wrecked their opponents' Bills they would not close their mouths. [*Opposition cheers.*] The people of London, and especially East London, for a portion of which he was entitled to speak, would learn with bitter disappointment and no little indignation the statement the House had just heard. The President of the Local Government Board minimised the character and importance of the water famine in the East of London, and laid the blame on the London County Council. There had been two water famines in the East of London, one in 1895 and one in 1896. He would admit, for the purposes of argument, that the famine of 1895 was due to the action of the London County Council in opposing the Bill of the East London Company. But this only involved a delay of a year. [*Renewed Ministerial cries of* "Divide."] Hon. Members below the gangway opposite who interrupted him so rudely had probably been brought down in response to a circular which had been issued by the East London Water Company, who had spared no pains to pack the House in their own interests. [*Ministerial cries of* "Oh!"] Letters had also been written, based on the circular, to Members from provincial cities, and to the Members from Manchester in particular, urging them to vote against these Bills, in order to deprive London of advantages which Manchester and other large cities enjoyed. [*Cheers.*] In 1896 the East London Company must have been in precisely the same position it would have been in if the London County Council had not interfered at all. Yet the water famine in East London in 1896 was worse than in 1895. The President of the Local Government Board said the Government had never committed themselves to the policy of purchase. The Colonial Secretary, at all events, committed himself to the general policy of purchase last year, and the only point on which he raised objection was the terms upon which the property of the water companies was to be acquired.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): That is not accurate. [*Ministerial laughter.*] I was then, and I am now, in favour of purchase as a principle, but in the case of the East London Company I raised objection to two things—first, to the purchase by the London County Council on different terms from any other representative body in the United Kingdom—["hear, hear!"]—and also to the way in which they proposed to deal with the outside districts. The case of London is exceptional altogether in that respect, and, although I am in favour of purchase as a principle, it may well be that it is impossible to apply the principle to London if you have to take into account outside districts.

MR. PICKERSGILL, resuming, said the right hon. Gentleman had borne out the statement he made that he was in favour of the principle of purchase, and the only points on which he differed were the terms upon which the water companies' property was to be acquired and the way in which the local authorities outside London were to be treated. These were exactly the questions which the Committee upstairs would be called upon to consider and decide. Whatever might be the case with the Government, the majority of London Members among their supporters were committed to the policy of purchase. Lord Onslow, who was acting in concert with hon. Members opposite and was the Leader of the Moderate Party in London, at a meeting in the East of London said control was impracticable; purchase was the only possible plan. Then the hon. Member for Bow and Bromley had written letters in *The Times* and elsewhere, saying:—

> "I am convinced that it is impossible to devise any scheme of control which is at once effective and equitable."

[*Ministerial cheers.*] At the meeting Lord Onslow attended a resolution was unanimously passed calling on the Government to introduce this Session a Bill for purchase. The Committee of the House last year also pronounced against the policy of control. The President of the Local Government Board said the policy of the Bill was a policy of severance. Certainly the Bill provided means by which the local authorities outside London might obtain control of their own water supply, and in that sense the policy of the Bill was a policy of severance. But so far as the area of the county of London was concerned, it was a policy of unity, and the London County Council, having acquired the property of these companies, would be able to use all the resources of various parts of London for the benefit of the whole. That would give what in the East End in 1895 and 1896 they felt so much the want of, the power to go to other parts of London and make the resources of water there available where it was short. Those who represented the people of London had great reason to complain of the action of the Government. They had retarded this question for years, and he agreed with the Member for Shoreditch that the ultimate result of their action would be to impose an additional burden which would be reckoned by millions of pounds on the ratepayers of London. [*Cheers.*]

MR. LIONEL HOLLAND (Tower Hamlets, Bow and Bromley) said it was perfectly true that many Members on the Government side were strongly in favour of the policy of purchase in preference to that of control. They stated this at the meeting to which the hon. Member who had just spoken had referred, but they never stated that they were in favour of a method of purchase, which must inevitably increase the burden of the ratepayers of London. He did not object to these Bills because they contained the principle of purchase. With that principle he was in entire agreement. But he objected to the method by which that principle was to be applied. It would deprive the policy of purchase of the benefits and advantages which would otherwise attend it. These Bills did not propose to substitute one company for the existing companies, nor to consolidate their different undertakings, and thus obtain the advantages which might thereby accrue in the direction of economy. The Bill proposed to replace the existing eight authorities by six or seven new authorities, and to split up the present areas of supply, and to deprive the consumers, the ratepayers of London, of all the opportunities of future profits which would result from the natural growth of the population in the outside areas. He believed those future profits would amount in the early part of the coming century to something like half-a-million pounds a year. The policy of the Party opposite and of the London County Council was to buy the rights of service and to constitute the County Council the sole authority for the county of London, and then to introduce a fresh supply altogether from Wales. Not only were the ratepayers deprived of their probable future profits, but they were to purchase on the basis of value and to sell upon the basis of the quantity of water which the outside authorities were at present receiving. That was a basis which might be very detrimental financially to London. There was one other point still more detrimental to London, and that was that the authorities, such as those of Surrey and Essex, were not to be compelled to buy, but were to have an optional purchase of two years, so that if in the meantime the terms on which the London County Council took over the companies proved to be disadvantageous Surrey and Essex could cry off, and leave London to make the best of its bad bargain. It was absurd of hon. Members opposite to pretend that those on that side of the House who were in favour of the policy of purchase in any way resigned their principles because they refused to sanction agreements and Bills of a kind which most probably would result in great detriment to London. By the rejection of these Bills the responsibility of the London County Council would be at an end, and the responsibility of the Government and of the President of the Local Government Board would begin. It was upon the advice of the Government that last year the House rejected the Transfer Bills which were introduced by the London County Council as inconsistent with the policy of the Measure which the Government had then introduced in another place; and they had the assurance of responsible Ministers that the rejection of those Bills would not result in any delay. [*Ironical Opposition cheers.*] That assurance was given probably, he thought, in the heat of debate, and without very careful consideration; but, at any rate, it had been renewed this year, and in a definite and unqualified form. They had the assurance in Her Majesty's Speech that a Water Bill would be introduced this Session, and by a Water Bill they did not understand such a small measure of control as had been suggested by the President of the Local Government Board—which he did not think would signify much to anyone in London—[*ironical Opposition cheers*]—but a Bill dealing in a final and complete manner with the whole water question. The policy of that Bill had as yet been enshrouded in mystery, so much so that those who were sceptical might almost doubt whether it had any existence, and that, perhaps, they should never discover. In view of the barren nature of the former assurances, he should like, before they went to a Division, another assurance from the Government. [*Opposition cheers.*] If it came to a question of supporting the Second Reading of these Bills, or resigning themselves to a policy of inaction or one obviously inadequate, however much he might doubt the expediency of many of the provisions of these Bills, nevertheless so injurious would further delay be that, subject to the Instruction to the Committee, which, he understood, the promoters of the Bill might be willing to consent to—["hear, hear!"]—of the two evils he should vote for the Second Reading. [*Opposition cheers.*] He hoped the Government would be able to say that, as soon as possible after the Report of the Commission, they would not fail to introduce some legislation of a final and complete character on this question. He hoped they would be able to give them such an assurance, not because they had found their assurances to be of very exceptional value—[*ironical Opposition cheers*]—but what they lacked in quality might, perhaps, be made up in quantity. [*Opposition laughter.*] He believed that, under the circumstances, the Government had chosen the wisest course, but if such an assurance could not be given, he would prefer not to join in the farce of adding one more Commission to the several Commissions which had already considered this question.

MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea) congratulated the hon. Member on representing East End opinion in regard to this matter. The hon. Member had been the first Member on the opposite side of the House to say that he was in favour of purchase under certain conditions, and the first to mention the word purchase as an alternative to the propositions put forward by the President of the Local Government Board. Moreover, he had transferred responsibility of any prospective drought or water famine in the East End of London from the shoulders of the County Council and hon. Members on that side of the House to the shoulders of the Government in general, and the President of the Local Government Board in particular. He believed at the next election that that view would be endorsed. He appealed to the hon. Member, whose candour was refreshing, to allow a Committee upstairs to determine the conditions of purchase. Such Committees were not generally in favour of confiscation, but had always been rather on the side of generous compensation. How could London go 40 miles for water and not make terms with the intervening authorities? And yet, if they did so, they were told that they had squared them, or make a corrupt bargain; and, if they did not, they were told that they were exclusive and arbitrary. Did the hon. Member for Chelsea think that if these Bills passed, after buying out the shareholders on the terms decided, the members of the London County Council would manage the concerns? They would do what the directors did now; they would take over the expert officers who now supplied the water companies, and he had no doubt those officers would be better pleased to work for the County Council. [*Cries of*

"No!"] If there was any doubt about that a 20 per cent. increase of salaries would remove it. [*Laughter.*] He knew what technical expert opinion in regard to water was. It could be tested in the committee rooms upstairs. [*Laughter.*] An expert who gave evidence on one side of a question would, for an increase in his fee, be as eloquent on the other side—[*laughter*]—and there was very little difference between those gentlemen and the officials of the water companies.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): And who would pay the difference? [*Cries of* "The ratepayers" *and laughter.*]

MR. BURNS said the ratepayers would not pay the difference. It would be made up by the difference between the 3 per cent. at which the London County Council could borrow money, and the 10 per cent. dividend the water companies now paid. [*Laughter.*]

MR. BANBURY: The companies raise their money at £2 15s. per cent. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. BURNS said the London County Council acquired their money at a little over £2. The hon. Member for Chelsea had urged as an argument against the Bill that the London County Council was too partisan a body. The partisanship of the London County Council was not to be compared with the partisanship of the authorities of some of the provincial towns. He was also glad to say it was decreasing. The fact that the two parties in the Council were working unanimously over the question of the Town Hall showed the spirit that was coming over London, and no one could deny that the House of Commons was more reasonable now than it was three years ago towards the London County Council. But if the partisanship of the London County Council became so marked as to imperil London government and the water supply, the ratepayers would quickly step in and see that the partisanship should not go too far. [*Ministerial cries of* "Divide!"] He knew it was very difficult to stand between the House of Commons and its dinner hour; but in the interests of the water supply of five millions of people he was prepared to do it. [*Laughter.*] The right hon. Gentleman the Member for London University had said that purchase could only be accomplished at the cost of doubling the debt of London, and that probably the County Council would have to pay more for their money than they were paying now. The tendency of money, especially in connection with corporation stock, was to cheapen very fast indeed, because people with money to invest had found that speculation in the Argentine, Rhodesia, Italy, and other foreign countries was not so certain as investment in corporation stock; and the difficulty of investors generally was the difficulty of his own trade union, which was prepared to invest £100,000 at 2½ per cent., and was unable to get even that low rate of interest.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD: Put it in East Londons. [*Laughter.*]

MR. BURNS: Not if I can help it. [*Laughter.*] Another point raised by the President of the Local Government Board was that the London County Council was responsible for the water famine of 1895 and 1896 in the East End of London. That was a most unfair charge. But, even if the London County Council were responsible for that water famine, what had it to do with the question of the purchase of the water supply of London? That was an immediate question. He believed that if those Bills were not passed, they would not be able to fight a water famine in the future—a water famine not imposed by the niggardliness of nature, but due to the mismanagement of the present supply. Many speeches had been delivered against the Bill, but he thought there was none more curious than that of one of the Members for Hertford (Mr. Hudson). The hon. Gentleman said that if the Bill passed, there was a possibility of the London County Council extracting 60 million gallons of water from Hertford, instead of 20 or 30 million gallons which the water companies now obtained from that county. But that was not an argument for passing the Bills, for the object of the Bills was to stop the water companies from draining Hertford of its water. It was evident that in 10, 15, or 20 years, after, probably, they had a series of water famines, and outbreaks of cholera, that the water supply of London must be taken out of the hands of monopolists, and they would have to go straight to Wales for a good and proper supply. If the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board was in any way doubtful as to the feeling of East London on the question, he should consult the hon. Member for West Ham, and the two hon. Members for Hackney, and if the right hon. Gentleman were to take by ballot the votes of all the Members for East London, he ventured to say that the unanimous opinion would be that purchase was inevitable, if not immediate. It had been said that it was not fair or just, that, while the outside area of London was increasing in population, and the inside area was decreasing in population, the inside area should have to bear the cost of those Bills. But, if the London outside areas were increasing in population, the demand for water was increasing for public, sanitary, and personal purposes, and that surely was an argument in favour of the Bill. It had been urged that but a small majority of the County Council were in favour of the policy adopted by the Council in regard to these Bills, but if a majority of three was good enough to throw out a Government in the House of Commons, which controlled the administration of the entire kingdom, surely a majority of from seven to 40, in the London County Council for the last seven years, ought to be sufficient to carry the policy of the Council in regard to the water supply of London. The right hon. Gentleman had told them that a Royal Commission on the subject was wanted. There had been eight Royal Commissions already, as well as Committee after Committee, and certainly another Royal Commission on the subject was not required. The right hon. Gentleman, moreover, stated that this question had become to some extent a political question, and that it was dangerous to give to the County Council the control of so many public services. But in the event of public services, either municipal or State, being inefficiently or improperly administered, the way to cure the evil was not to do an injustice to the community, but to place restrictions on that labour, that would keep it in its proper place. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board had said that this series of Bills was unprecedented, and that London would not make the profit that had been stated if she had the water supply in her own hands. If the right hon. Gentleman would examine the history of the water supply of this country, he would find that 800 local authorities had come to this House for the transfer of water supplies from private hands to public hands, and that, not in a single instance, had it been refused, and not in a single instance had it been given back again. It had been said that if they went to Wales for water, it would cost 40 or 50 millions sterling. He believed it would cost no more than 19 or 20 millions. But whether they went to Wales and spent 40 millions, or continued to derive their water from its present polluted catchment area, was a subject, not for the House, but for the ratepayers of the metropolis to decide. The Royal Commission, if appointed, would only hang up the question for five or seven years. It had already been discussed for five years in the House of Commons, and if the Bills were passed the transfers could not be actually made for 18 months or two years, and if they had a Royal Commission, and a General Election intervening, four or five years was a moderate estimate of the time that would be occupied with the question. The hon. Member for Uxbridge represented a riparian constituency. The hon. Gentleman took a great interest in the affairs of the River Thames. The hon. Gentleman was a representative of a riverside parish, so was he. The County Council wanted these Bills passed, not only for a better, purer, and cheaper water supply for the people of London, but also in the interests of the drainage of the river, and of the commerce of London. The abstraction by the water companies of 135 million gallons of water in July and August of last year—that was, of nearly half the natural flow over Teddington Weir—was killing the boat and pleasure traffic between Hammersmith and Teddington, and it had compelled the Conservancy to erect Richmond Lock Bridge. That lock was erected simply because Richmond, Kew, and Kingston would have turned out every Conservative Member if it had not been erected. [*Laughter.*]

*SIR F. DIXON-HARTLAND: We erected the Richmond lock and weir contrary to our own wishes, upon the orders of this House, and the result has been that the scour of the water has been so very much diminished that the navigation has been greatly interfered with.

MR. BURNS said that the hon. Member could tell that to the marines—

[*much laughter*]—but he would not tell it to the bargemen and lightermen.

*Mr. SPEAKER said that the effect of Richmond Lock was not the question before the House.

Mr. BURNS said that he was asked by the representatives both of capital and labour to protest against the Thames being starved of its natural flow. The House would be taking on itself a tremendous responsibility by throwing out these Bills. It would not attempt such a course in regard to Manchester or Glasgow. It was simply because the London County Council had incurred unpopularity—[*Ministerial cheers*]—with vested interests—[*Opposition cheers*]—and with rich monopolists—[*Opposition cheers*]—an unpopularity that endeared it to the hearts of the disinterested and poorer citizens. Some day when, through the lack of a County Council water supply, the West End of London was threatened with disease, and the convenience of the rich was jeopardised, the House of Commons would do for the London water supply what it had already done for its drainage 30 or 40 years ago. [*Cheers and ironical cheers.*] When another election came, and this question was raised, all the battalions of directors whom he saw opposite, all the monopolists who had not behaved as well as they might have done, would be relegated to the obscurity which they deserved. [*Ironical cheers.*] The water companies, as *Punch* had depicted them, had preferred the grasping of big dividends to the health and safety of the people of London; and when their day of reckoning came, let them not blame the County Council, but rather the President of the Local Government Board, who, instead of standing up for the best traditions of his Department, had preferred monopolist interests to the health and cleanliness of the people of London. [*Cheers and ironical cheers.*]

*Sir F. DIXON-HARTLAND rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put," but Mr. Speaker withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

Debate resumed.

*Mr. HARRY MARKS (Tower Hamlets, St. George's) said that he had no complaint to make of the Government's severe criticisms of the County Council Bills, but he did complain of the inadequate and unsatisfactory alternative offered to them by the Government. For many months there had been in the East End a firm belief that the Government did mean to do something comprehensive and effective in respect of the London water supply. What it now promised fell very far short of what people had been encouraged to expect. The Queen's Speech spoke of "a Bill to improve the arrangements for the water supply of the metropolis;" surely that was not the Bill of which the President of the Local Government Board had given an outline. Was the promise of a Royal Commission a fulfilment of the pledge given by the First Lord of the Treasury in August to the hon. Member for Bow and Bromley? The right hon. Gentleman then said:—

> "I have to say that the Government are deeply sensible of the importance of the question to London generally, and to the East End in particular; and we strongly feel that the next Session ought not to pass without a solution of the question being arrived at."

There had been various descriptions of Royal Commissions, but whatever else a Royal Commission might be, it was not a solution of the London water question. On the strength of that declaration and of the promise contained in Her Majesty's Speech, and of the utterances of the trusted Members of the Government on public platforms, the Unionist Members representing East London constituencies had pledged themselves that this Government did mean to deal effectively with the water question. They had pledged not only their own faith, but they had been foolish enough to pledge the faith of their leaders.

> "This meeting calls upon Her Majesty's Government, during the next Session of Parliament, to constitute an authority for the water supply representing the interests of the consumers, with powers of control and purchase."

That was a resolution which was put at a meeting at which every Unionist Member for East London was present—a meeting called under the auspices of the London Municipal Society, to which the Moderate Party owed most of its successes on the County Council for the last two years. Similar resolutions had been passed in every East London constituency, and similar resolutions were being passed that day in view of the Whitechapel bye-election. With so many promises, it was not unreasonable to look for more performance. But what was the position in which the Government left those who favoured purchase of the water companies? They must either vote for the Royal Commission, which was to inquire into a matter which had been inquired into for the past 30 years; or they must vote for these deplorably bad Bills of the London County Council, impracticable and unworkable from the beginning to the end. It was difficult to know which was the worse outlook. They were disappointed in the expectation they had formed that the Government would have given them a reasonable alternative to these impossible Bills. The outside areas were bribed by unfair treatment to withdraw their opposition to the County Council scheme. Lord James of Hereford's proposed water trust of last Session quite unnecessarily gave a majority of Members to the County Council, and these outside areas, rather than be under the government of the County Council, knowing, as they did, how it used its power, had bought their release or had agreed to buy it whenever the time might come. The Government, with a full knowledge of the situation, left those Unionist Members who represented London constituencies, and who were pledged to water purchase, no alternative but either to support these Bills or to hang up this question indefinitely. That was a position which only needed to be stated to show in what a deplorable plight such a policy as this must land those who had foolishly, perhaps from inexperience, perhaps from excessive zeal, but certainly in good faith, placed, or misplaced, their confidence in the promises of the Government.

*COLONEL HUGHES said that, as a London Member, he was in favour of purchase, but the Bills of the County Council were to purchase first, and then to sell nearly the whole of the water supply to other people. There should be one local authority for the entire area, and they would see how important that would become by-and-bye when they wanted a new supply. One authority would not only manage the present water supply, but arrange for a new one. Seven-eighths of the London Members sat on that side of the House, and their opinion was against these Bills, and he thought that, as they had been elected since the County Council was elected, and on a larger poll, they could claim to represent a greater portion of the ratepayers and a greater feeling of the ratepayers on financial question, than the County Council.

Question put. The House divided:—Ayes, 123; Noes 258.—(Division List, No. 92.)

Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to. Second Reading put off for six months.

EAST LONDON WATER (PURCHASE) BILL (BY ORDER).

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged; Bill withdrawn.

GRAND JUNCTION WATER (PURCHASE) BILL (BY ORDER).

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged; Bill withdrawn.

KENT WATER (PURCHASE) BILL (BY ORDER).

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged; Bill withdrawn.

LAMBETH WATER (PURCHASE) BILL (BY ORDER).

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged; Bill withdrawn.

NEW RIVER WATER (PURCHASE) BILL (BY ORDER).

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged; Bill withdrawn.

SOUTHWARK AND VAUXHALL WATER (PURCHASE) BILL (BY ORDER).

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged; Bill withdrawn.

WEST MIDDLESEX WATER (PURCHASE) BILL (BY ORDER).

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged ; Bill withdrawn.

LONDON WATER (PURCHASE) BILL (BY ORDER).

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged ; Bill withdrawn.

KENT WATER BOARD BILL (BY ORDER).

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged : Bill withdrawn.

QUESTIONS.

ORDNANCE STORE DEPARTMENT.

MR. H. C. F. LUTTRELL (Devon, Tavistock) : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is in a position to give any information concerning the consideration of the grievances felt by the five conductors of the Ordnance Store Department, who were selected and transferred from Army to Naval Service on 9th February last ?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square) : The case referred to by the hon. Member raises a question as to the scope of an Order in Council, with regard to rights and privileges reserved to these conductors on their transfer to the Naval service. They claim promotion in Army rank while in civil employment under the Admiralty. There is some difference of opinion as to how the Order in Council ought to be read. The matter is still under consideration.

ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE (CANTEEN).

CAPTAIN PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been drawn to the statement in the Report of the Board of Visitors upon the Royal Military College, that the canteen of that institution was built out of canteen profits, and at no cost to the taxpayer ; and whether the Government will inquire into the matter with a view of taking more stringent steps to prevent the continuance of such a system in other military quarters ?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. POWELL-WILLIAMS, Birmingham, S.) : The canteen at the Royal Military College was built many years ago, before the adoption there of the present regimental system of canteens. It was constructed by the riding master out of profits arising from the sale of beer ; and it was erected without any cost to the taxpayer. The building is unsuited for its purpose ; and a sum of £1,200 is taken in the Army Estimates for its replacement, No parallel case is known ; and no buildings are now allowed to be erected for canteen purposes otherwise than by the War Department.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.) asked whether in the new canteen of the Royal Military College there was to be no recreation room ?

MR. POWELL-WILLIAMS : No ; I understand that the new canteen when erected will contain a recreation room.

SUNDAY LETTER DELIVERY (LUCAN, CO. DUBLIN).

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Cavan, W.) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he is aware that there is no Sunday delivery of letters in Lucan, County Dublin ; and is it proposed to continue that arrangement for so important a portion of Dublin County ?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. R. W. HANBURY, Preston) : The Postmaster General is aware that there is no delivery in Lucan on Sunday morning, nor any mail arriving from Dublin. In accordance with the regulations affecting Sunday Posts, the question of establishing such a service can only be favourably considered on receipt of a Memorial signed by the receivers of not less than two-thirds of the correspondence for Lucan.

ASSIZE CIRCUITS (IRELAND).

MR. J. P. FARRELL : I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether the Government is bound to provide special trains to carry Her Majesty's Judges on circuit in Ireland; and can he state the approximate cost per Judge of those trains; is the amount charged on imperial or local taxes; and, if the latter, is it levied by presentment?

*The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. J. Atkinson, Londonderry, N.): The Government are not bound to provide special trains for the conveyance of the Judges on circuit in Ireland, nor, as a matter of fact, are such facilities provided by Government. It is quite possible, of course, that railway companies occasionally do supply special trains to meet the convenience of the Judges, but if any extra charge is ever claimed it is defrayed solely by those who use the trains.

ENLISTMENT OF BOYS.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that James Thomas Nolan enlisted in the Connaught Regiment at Galway in October, 1896, being then but 17 years old; that, although his father enclosed a certificate to the Commanding Officer, demanding his discharge on the ground that he was under age, the officer refused to discharge him without a payment of £10; and, was this charge in accordance with the Regulations; and, if not, will a refund be made to the boy's father?

Mr. POWELL-WILLIAMS: This recruit gave his age on enlistment as 19 years; and he had the full physical characteristics of that age. The General Officer Commanding—with whom the decision rested—therefore held him to serve; but he claimed his discharge under Section 81 of the Army Act, which involved the payment of what is known as smart money. The charge was strictly in accordance with the Regulations.

Captain PIRIE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War if he can state the number of applications which are made annually by, or on behalf of, young soldiers to be relieved of their engagements to serve on the ground that they had enlisted below the age of 18 years, proof being produced that the statement in this respect was correct; and whether the Secretary of State for War would be prepared, in order to put an end to the enlistment of boys under 18, which now prevails to so great an extent, to require all recruiting officers in future to obtain certificates of birth of those applying to them to enlist?

Mr. POWELL-WILLIAMS: 402 applications by or on behalf of young soldiers to be released from their engagements were received in 1896; being 105 less than the number received in 1895. The question of requiring recruits to produce certificates of birth has frequently been considered, but the adoption of such a course has been found impracticable. The inspecting medical officers are required to assure themselves that recruits possess the physical qualities of the age they give. This as a rule is a sufficient safeguard; when subsequent questions arise, the birth certificate if obtainable, is called for.

ARMY PENSION (JOHN MULCAHY).

Mr. J. J. SHEE (Waterford, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether application has recently been made by Private John Mulcahy, pensioner, late of the 41st Welsh Regiment, who is in receipt of a pension of 8*d*. per diem, and is now an invalid in Dungarvan Union Hospital, for admission to Chelsea Hospital, or an addition to his present pension; whether he is aware that John Mulcahy served 21 years and 135 days with the colours, of which 14 years were spent in foreign service, and that he received medal and clasp for services in the Crimean War; and whether, as he is now 62 years of age and suffering from chronic rheumatism, some additional provision will be made for him?

Mr. POWELL-WILLIAMS: No application from John Mulcahy for admission to Chelsea Hospital has been received; but if made it could not be complied with, as he is ineligible. The statements in the Question as to Mulcahy's service are accurate in the main; but his pension was only eight-pence a day as he had no good conduct badges; and as he was in good health when discharged, and there is nothing to show that his present bad health is attributable to Army service, there are no grounds on which his pension could be increased under the warrants.

POST OFFICE ESTABLISHMENTS (REPORT).

SIR JOHN LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, if he can say whether the Report of Lord Tweedmouth's Committee will be accompanied by the decision of the Postmaster General upon its recommendations and a scheme for giving effect to them; and whether, having regard to the long period that has elapsed between the appointment of the Committee and the presentation of the Report and the delay in making its recomendations known, the revision following the Report will be ante-dated to the time when those recomendations were originally forwarded to the Treasury, as was done in the case of the Fawcett Revision of 1881, so that those affected will not suffer through the protracted delay?

MR. HANBURY: The Report of Lord Tweedmouth's Committee was received by the Postmaster General on the 21st December last. The Report has been laid on the Table of this House, with a copy of the Treasury letter conveying their decision on the recommendation of the Report. The period that elapsed between the appointment of the Committee and the presentation of the Report was occupied in receiving and considering the evidence which it was the desire of the staff to give. I am not prepared to admit, having regard to the elaborate nature of the inquiry, that the period was long, or that any delay has since occurred in considering the conclusions of the Committee. I can see no reason for antedating any changes which may be introduced in accordance with the Committee's recommendation.

SIR J. LENG: When will the Report be distributed?

MR. HANBURY: That depends upon the printers, but I should hope certainly on Monday.

MR. CHARLES SHAW (Stafford): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he can state definitely the date on which the Report of the Committee on the Post Office will be presented to the House?

MR. HANBURY: The hon. Member, will doubtless see that the Return has already been presented.

MONAGHAN ASSIZES (DIMINUTION OF CRIME).

MR. JAMES DALY (Monaghan, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—(1) whether he is aware that Judge Gibson was on Friday last at Monaghan presented with white gloves by the High Sheriff of the county on account of there being no criminal cases to be tried at the Assizes; (2) whether he is aware that County Monaghan was the only Ulster county without criminal cases at the late Winter Assizes, and that the County Court Judge of Monaghan was presented with white gloves at Castleblaney in January last owing to the crimeless state of the district; and (3) whether under these circumstances, he will have the police hut at Dromod, South Monaghan, removed?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds, Central): The facts are correctly stated in the first and second paragraphs. As to the third paragraph, I have more than once explained to the hon. Member the circumstances which necessitated the establishment of this police station, and I have only to add that there is no intention at present to remove it. No charge to the locality is entailed by the maintenance of this station.

WARDEN ESTATE, CO. KERRY.

MR. JOHN DILLON (Mayo, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state what was the total amount of arrears on the Warden estate at Sneem, in the County of Kerry, when the estate was purchased by its present owner; whether he is aware that the arrears were purchased for a sum insignificant in comparison with their nominal amount; that the present landlord is exacting the arrears in full, together with interest at the rate of four per cent.; that several evictions have taken place; and that the rates in the district are now nearly ten shillings in the pound on the poor law valuation; and whether the Government propose to take any action towards relieving a condition of things most dangerous to the peace of the country?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: My information does not enable me to state what was the total amount of arrears on this estate at the time it was purchased by the present owner, nor the sum paid for these arrears. I am informed, however, that the landlord has been collect- the arrears by easy instalments, and that he has not charged any interest on them. The rates in the district amount to nine shillings in the pound on the valuation—a sum which, I understand, is lower than before the present owner purchased the property. There have been several evictions on the estate since Mr. Warden came into possession, and I have no reason to believe that any of these evictions was a case of hardship. The tenants evicted owed from 2½ to 9 years' rent, and the last eviction was in June 1895, the tenant in this case owing 6 years' rent. There is nothing in the state of affairs in the district calling for the intervention of Government, and obviously the Government cannot interfere in the mangement of the estate. I desire to add that the information before me leads me to think that Mr. Warden is an excellent landlord, who is anxious for the welfare of the tenants holding under him, and spends his money freely in order to provide them with work, and so help them in a businesslike way out of their difficulties, which are, in considerable measure, due to the lax administration of the estate by its previous owners.

IRISH NATIONAL SCHOOL TEACHERS (RESIDUAL GRANT).

Mr. PATRICK M'HUGH (Leitrim, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a considerable portion of the Residual School Grant due to Irish national teachers for the year 1896 is still unpaid, although it should have been paid in January; will he explain the cause of the delay, and take steps to insure that the teachers are promptly paid all sums due to to them?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: The residual portion of the School Grant is payable in five instalments. Of these, four are paid quarterly, but there is no engagement or obligation on the part of the Commissioners of National Education to pay the fifth instalment, or outstanding balance, in the month of January. Payment of the balance could not be made until the average daily attendance of pupils is first ascertained from the School Returns for the year ended 31st December, as the amount of the entire School Grant, and therefore also the amount of the balance, is proportional to the average daily attendance of pupils. In many cases the School Returns were not furnished in January. The balance will now be paid as promptly as possible.

NAVAL ENGINEER OFFICERS.

Mr. J. PENN (Lewisham): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if he could state to the House how many engineer officers have been added in the current year; how many of these officers passed through Keyham College, and how many were obtained from outside; and how many engineer officers it is proposed to add in the year 1897–98?

The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Mr. W. E. Macartney, Antrim, S.): Forty engineer officers have been added to the list in the current year. Of the 63 entries which resulted in this addition, 31 passed through Keyham, and 32 came from outside, the latter comprising 14 probationary assistant engineers and 18 assistant engineers for temporary service. It is proposed to add 30 engineer officers in 1897–98, and provision will also be made for the promotion of some engine-room artificers to warrant rank.

COLONIAL AND FOREIGN LETTERS (REPLY POSTAGE).

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he has been informed that there is an urgent and increasing demand for some means of prepaying the postage on replies to letters of inquiry sent to British Colonies and Foreign Countries, and of remitting the price of a newspaper or other article of small cost; whether, seeing that inland United Kingdom stamps can be obtained in small quantities at various post offices in the Colonies for transmission to England, he will consider the expediency of opening an office at St. Martin's-le-Grand, and in each of the great mercantile centres of the United Kingdom, at which Foreign and Colonial stamps shall be sold to a limited amount for transmission to the Colonies and Foreign Countries, or received in exchange for stamps of the United Kingdom at a small profit in either case to the Post Office, with a view to facilitate epistolary communication, the ordering of samples, and the opening of commercial transactions between this country and the Colonies and Foreign Countries; and whether any solution of the difficulty alleged to exist in connection with the Institution of a common international stamp has yet been devised?

MR. HANBURY: The Postmaster General has not been informed, and is not aware that there is an urgent and increasing demand for some means of prepaying the postage on replies to letters of inquiry sent to British Colonies and Foreign Countries, and of remitting the price of a newspaper or other article of small cost. As I stated, in reply to a similar question asked by the hon. Member on the 22nd of August 1895, he does not feel that he would be justified in making arrangements for the sale of Colonial stamps, for which he believes that there is no effective demand here. The Postmaster General is not aware that any solution has yet been devised of the difficulty attending the institution of a common international stamp.

MONEY ORDERS (FRIENDLY SOCIETIES).

SIR JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he can give any assurance that an endeavour will be made to mitigate the ill effects upon the system pursued by the Hearts of Oak Benefit Society of sending sick pay by money orders caused by the recent increase of commission on such orders?

MR. HANBURY: I would refer my hon. and gallant Friend to the reply which I gave on the 23rd ult. to the hon. Members for South Somerset and the Leominster Division of Herefordshire, and to the Member for Walthamstow last Tuesday.

MARINE FORCE IN NAVAL BASES.

SIR JOHN COLOMB: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty (1) what was the number of seamen quartered in barracks at the naval bases at home at Plymouth, Portsmouth, and Chatham, including Sheerness, respectively on 1st instant; (2) what was the number of seamen on board sea-going ships in commission or in reserve at those ports respectively on the 1st inst.; (3) whether the admirals commanding in chief at each of these naval bases were in supreme command both of seamen in barracks and the seamen in the ships; (4) whether the seamen are changed from barracks to ships and ships to barracks according to the necessities of the Naval service and of the training of the seamen; and (5), whether he has been informed by his advisers that the requirements of the Naval service and the thorough efficiency of the seamen are fully provided for by the system of interchange from barracks to ships and ships to barracks at these naval bases and coaling ports at home?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: The number of seamen in the divisions at the naval ports at home on the 1st of the month was:—Portsmouth, 2,710 (1,700 in gunnery and torpedo schools); Devonport, 2,268 (1,250 in gunnery and torpedo schools); Chatham (including Sheerness), 1,817 (600 in gunnery and torpedo schools). These numbers include men in depôts, gunnery and torpedo schools, and those employed as care and maintenance parties of ships in reserve and in tenders. The number of seamen in sea-going ships in commission at the same ports was:—Portsmouth, 1,319; Devonport, 136; Chatham (including Sheerness), 492. All these numbers vary from day to day, and those in ships in commission are entirely dependent upon the ships that happen to be at the port. For instance the *Collingwood*, *Prince George*, *Blake*, *Melpomene*, and *Calliope* happened to be at Portsmouth on that day, while at Devonport only the *Algerine* and *Gossamer* were in port. The answer to the third Question of the hon. and gallant Member is in the affirmative. There is no systematic exchange of men, as implied in the Question, from barracks to ships and *vice versâ*; seamen merely pass through the depôts in being changed from one ship's commission to another, training at the gunnery and torpedo schools in the interval. It is not considered that any systematic interchange as suggested in the Question would be of advantage to the Service.

WRECK (INDIAN TROOPSHIP "WARREN HASTINGS").

Mr. JAMES ROCHE (Kerry, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether he can give, even approximately, the average length of service of the soldiers on board the *Warren Hastings*, the conspicuous steadiness and discipline of whom, under such trying circumstances, entirely contributed to the immunity from a grave loss of life when that ship was recently wrecked on the island of Réunion?

Mr. POWELL-WILLIAMS: The average service of the soldiers on board the *Warren Hastings* was probably between four and five years, which is the average of all foreign battalions.

Mr. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.) asked whether it was not a fact that most of the non-commissioned officers and rank and file of this regiment which displayed such marvellous discipline and steadiness on the occasion referred to, were Irishmen? [*Laughter.*]

Mr. POWELL-WILLIAMS said he had no information upon the point.

BOILER EXPLOSION (H.M.S. "BLAKE").

Mr. E. J. C. MORTON (Devonport): On behalf of my hon. Friend the Member for Devonport (Mr. Hudson Kearley), I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether it is possible to increase the pension of 3s. 6d. per week allowed to the widow, and 1s. 6d. for each child, of George Evill, stoker, who was killed by the explosion of a boiler on H.M.S. *Blake*; and whether, in view of the fact that the widow is in such a state of health as to be unable to do any work towards supporting herself and her two children, and that the coroner's jury gave a verdict that the disaster was occasioned by the negligence of the chief engineer, whom they found guilty of manslaughter, and, further, that the foreman, on behalf of the jury, stated in court that they unanimously decided to urge on the Admiralty their view that the widow has a very strong claim for special consideration, and hoped she would be provided for for life and her children looked after until they were old enough to secure livelihood, he will reconsider the case?

The CIVIL LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Worcestershire, E.): In view of the widow's state of health, the Admiralty have decided to increase the pension, together with the allowances to children, by a sum of 2s. 6d. a week. The increase is to take effect from the date of her husband's death.

ILLEGAL FISHING.

Mr. J. W. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether, seeing that Clause 8 of the Herring Fishery (Scotland) Act 1889, prohibits the landing of fish caught by illegal methods at Scotch ports only, and that a foreign trawler recently found fishing illegally, landed the fish at an English port, Her Majesty's Government will take steps to amend the law so as to extend the prohibition to any British port?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. Graham Murray, Buteshire): An Amendment of the law on the lines desired affects England and English ports. It will be necessary for the hon. Member to approach the Board of Trade with reference to any legislation of this nature.

TELEGRAPH STATION (DRINAGH, CO. CORK.)

Mr. J. GILHOOLY (Cork Co., W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he can state if it is proposed to establish a telegraph station at Drinagh, County Cork?

Mr. HANBURY: Inquiry has been made, from which it appears that the Postmaster General would not be justified in opening a telegraph office at Drinagh except under guarantee.

LETTER DELIVERY (LITTLEPORT CAMBRIDGESHIRE).

Mr. C. T. GILES (Cambridge, Wisbech): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, why letters are not delivered at all at some houses at Littleport, in Cambridgeshire, although at a less distance from the post office than other houses which receive their letters twice a day?

Mr. HANBURY: The official delivery of letters at Littleport was recently extended at the hon. Member's request.

It is not known that there are still houses at Littleport without a delivery, although nearer the post office than other houses receiving letters twice a day; but inquiry is being made, and the result shall be communicated to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

"LORD'S RENT" (ISLE OF MAN).

MR. J. A. WILLOX (Liverpool, Everton): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that a large porportion of the revenue of the Isle of Man is collected in the name of "Lord's Rent" by one of the landlords in each parish, called the Moar, and compulsorily appointed by the Department of Woods and Forests; whether the Moar is supplied with a list of persons represented as liable for the Lord's Rent, many of whom have been dead for a century, while others cannot be traced, nor the land put against their names be distinguished; whether serious complaints of this state of things have from time to time reached the Department of Woods and Forests from Moars who are unable to collect Lord's Rent, and have in reply been warned that if they should, in the Insular Law Courts, successfully establish their freedom from liability, an appeal to the Privy Council would follow; and whether the Woods and Forests will now provide authentic collecting books for the use of the Moars, or take the collecting into their own hands?

MR. HANBURY: The amount of Lord's Rent, exclusive of rents of Abbey lands and Baronies, payable to the Crown in the Isle of Man, is £1,175 17s. 9d. It is collected in 17 distinct parishes, the largest amount in any parish being £113 18s. 1d., and the smallest £33 9s. 0½d. The Moar is not appointed either compulsorily or otherwise by the Department of Woods and Forests. He is selected in rotation by the Court Baron, called the Setting Quest, which consists exclusively of tenants of the Lord within the parish. The duty of filling the office, and performing the duties of the Moar, is an incident of tenure. It is the duty of the Moar on retiring from office to hand on to his successor a rental in a proper state to enable him to collect from the several lands in the parish the Lord's Rent due from them. Successive Moars have been negligent in not keeping their rental up to date, and complaints have been made that it has been difficult to collect the rent. Moars who have refused to perform their duty have been informed that legal proceedings in the Insular Court would be taken to compel them, but there has been no necessity to give any warning in regard to an Appeal to the Privy Council. Landowners are not justified in holding land if they refuse to perform the duties arising from the tenure; they are bound to pay over to the Crown the full rent due from their respective parishes; and, although as an Act of Grace the Crown has made an allowance to the Moar in respect of the difficulty of collection, the Department cannot take the collecting into its own hands. Every assistance that the Seneschal can render to the Moars will, as hitherto, be freely given, but the Setting Quest cannot be relieved of its proper duty. Acting under the direction of the Commissioner of Woods, the Seneschal has devoted a great deal of time to assist the several Setting Quests in getting the rentals in proper order, and there is now only one district where any difficulty exists. That district includes the town of Douglas, and, in order to apply a remedy there, the Commissioner of Woods induced the Insular Authorities in 1895 to pass an Act providing for the redemption of the Lord's Rent on favourable conditions.

IRISH MAIL SERVICE.

MR. GILHOOLY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether any improved arrangements have been made for the transit and delivery of the mails between Skibbereen and Crookhaven?

MR. HANBURY: I have already informed the hon. Member that the question of using the tramway between Skibbereen and Schull is under inquiry, and that when the report has been received and considered the result shall be communicated to him. These Postal questions often necessitate returns of the correspondence and the personal visit of one of the Surveying Staff, who may have many similar matters on hand to which precedence must be given. In the present case negotiations with the Tramway Company may also be necessary. So that, in any event, some time may elapse before it may be possible to give a definite reply to the hon. Member.

Mr. MAURICE HEALY (Cork): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether, in fixing the new mail time table as between Dublin and Cork, the long interval which now exists between the arrival of the mail at Kingstown and its dispatch for Cork will be put an end to, and the mail dispatched for Cork without any delay?

Mr. HANBURY: Allowing for the time necessary for the journey from Kingstown to Kingsbridge, the interval between the arrival of the mail packet at Kingstown and the departure of the mail train from Kingsbridge to Cork affords a margin of about 20 minutes for irregularity. A margin is absolutely necessary to secure some degree of punctuality in the departure of the Dublin to Cork train, and 20 minutes has not proved in the past more than sufficient for the purpose. The Postmaster General therefore proposes to maintain this interval.

LAND SUB-COMMISSION (COUNTIES FERMANAGH AND MONAGHAN).

Mr. D. MACALEESE (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—(1) if he will explain the cause of the delay in giving decisions in the land cases which were heard at Lisnaskea, county Fermanagh, on the 2nd of January last; (2) why the Sub-Commissioners have not as yet inspected the holdings of those tenants whose cases were heard at Clones, county Monaghan, on the 5th and 6th of February; (3) how many cases in the counties of Fermanagh and Monaghan in which the originating notices to have fair rents fixed were served before the 1st of last November have not as yet been listed for hearing; and when will there be another sitting of the Sub-Commissioners to hear these cases; and (4) whether it is intended to appoint additional Sub-Commissioners, so as to prevent an accumulation of arrears of business and to dispose speedily of cases in which notices to have fair rents fixed have been served?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: The cases referred to in the first paragraph were heard on the 4th January, but the inspections were necessarily postponed for some weeks in consequence of the illness of one of the Assistant Commissioners. The inspections have since taken place and the decisions will soon be announced. The holdings in the Clones cases are now being inspected. There are in Fermanagh and Monaghan 86 cases pending, in which originating notices were lodged prior to the 1st November last. A Sub-Commission Court will commence its sittings for cases arising out of the Monaghan Union on the 16th inst., and this list, when disposed of, will probably be followed by a new list for Clones Union. It is proposed to appoint some additional Sub-Commissioners shortly.

Mr. MAURICE HEALY asked whether the Land Commission Department had been yet able to form any opinion as to the extent to which the delay which had arisen in fixing fair rents was due to the new schedule in the Act?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR said that in the opinion of the Land Commissioners delay had been caused by the Schedule, but he was not able to indicate precisely the amount of the delay.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS BILL (HALF-TIME SCHOLARS).

Mr. J. H. YOXALL (Nottingham, W.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if, for the purposes of the Voluntary Schools Bill, the attendance of half-time scholars will be computed as under Article 12 (b) of the Day School Code?

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Sir John Gorst, Cambridge University): Yes, Sir, unless hereafter the Education Department make fresh rules for computing average attendance for the purposes of this Bill.

EDUCATION CODE, 1897 (TEACHERS).

Colonel MILWARD (Warwick, Stratford-upon-Avon): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether, under Article 71 of the Code of 1897, the words "after Jan. 1st 1898, the Department may refuse to recognise any teachers not so engaged," will apply to teachers engaged before that date?

Sir J. GORST: No, Sir.

DANISH TRAWLERS IN SCOTTISH WATERS.

Mr. CHARLES H. WILSON (Hull, W.). I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that, although the Moray Firth is closed against British fishing vessels, the foreign steam trawler *Dania* has recently landed for three voyages fish from the Moray Firth on the Hull market; and what action he proposes to take in the matter?

Captain PIRIE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, with regard to the practice of foreign trawlers fishing within the area prohibited by the bye-laws of the Scotch Fishery Board, and landing the fish so caught at English ports, he will urge upon the Government the necessity of immediately amending the Law of England so as to prevent the continuance of a practice which places Scotch fishing interests at a disadvantage compared to those of a foreign nation?

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Ritchie, Croydon): I am aware that it has been reported that the *Dania* landed at Hull 250 cwt. of fish, which were declared as having been caught on the deep sea fishing grounds, and that they were thought to have been taken within the prohibited area, but I have no knowledge as to a general practice of the kind by foreign trawlers. The legislation asked for by the hon. Gentleman raises many questions of a serious character, and, as at present advised, I do not think the facts are such as would justify us in undertaking it.

NAZIM PACHA.

Mr. J. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Secretary of State has yet received official information that Nazim Pacha, the Minister of Police during the massacres at Constantinople, has been appointed Governor General of the Province of Beyrout; whether this appointment has been made under the system of reformed administration guaranteed by the Ottoman Porte; if the Secretary of State has not received official information, will he institute inquiries as to whether the appointment to this Governor Generalship of Nazim Pacha has been made, as positively stated in the Public Press; and whether, in the event of the appointment having been made, the Secretary of State will direct the British Ambassador at Constantinople to make a strong remonstrance on the subject, and to insist, in the interest of the lives of the Christian population, that Nazim Pacha's appointment be instantly cancelled?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. G. Curzon, Lancashire, Southport): No official information has yet been received of this appointment, but inquiries will be made. Beyrout was not one of the six vilayets to which the scheme of reforms agreed upon in October, 1895, was to be applied.

Mr. MACNEILL asked whether he was to understand that no inquiries had yet been made, seeing that he put a question upon the subject on Tuesday?

Mr. CURZON said he did not know the exact moment a telegram had been or would be sent.

MUZZLING DOGS.

Mr. H. C. STEPHENS (Middlesex, Hornsey): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he is aware that a dog was killed by the police at Hendon on 4th March, and that, upon *post-mortem* by the County Veterinary Inspector, rabies was found to be markedly present; and whether further effort can be made to expedite the completion of arrangements for the muzzling order he has decided to issue?

*The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of AGRICULTURE (Mr. Walter Long, Liverpool, West Derby): I am aware of the case to which my hon. Friend directs attention. Every possible effort is being made to expedite the completion of the arrangements we propose to make for the suppression of rabies.

DAUNT'S ROCK LIGHTSHIP.

Mr. MAURICE HEALY: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether any precedent exists for the holding in Dublin of an inquiry into the loss of a vessel where such vessel was lost on some part of the Irish coast remote from Dublin; why the usual practice in such cases of holding the Inquiry in the locality of the wreck has been departed from in the case of the *Puffin* Inquiry, seeing that such inquiries have been repeatedly held at Cork in the case of wrecks near that port; whether it is usual for the next of kin of the parties lost in the wreck to be represented at the Inquiry; and, in view of the desirability of having them represented at the *Puffin* Inquiry, and the practical impossibility of this except at great expense if the sitting is at Dublin, the Board of Trade will direct the Inquiry to be adjourned to Cork?

Mr. RITCHIE: Yes, Sir, in deciding where an Inquiry is to be held, the principal point for consideration is not where the accident happened, but where the owners and chief witnesses live and can most conveniently attend. Relations of persons who have lost their lives in shipping casualties are occasionally represented at inquiries. The *Puffin*, however, was owned in Dublin, where a large number of the witnesses reside, and I do not propose to make any change in the arrangements already made.

Mr. MAURICE HEALY asked if it was not a fact that a large number of witnesses resided at Queenstown?

Mr. RITCHIE said the object of the Inquiry was to ascertain what it was that caused the accident, and he was informed that the great majority, if not the whole, of those who could throw light upon that particular point resided in or near Dublin, and that it would be inconvenient to them if the Inquiry were held at Cork.

Mr. MAURICE HEALY asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would see that a number of the survivors who resided at Queenstown were brought to Dublin?

Mr. RITCHIE said that if there was anyone residing in Queenstown who desired to give evidence, and whose evidence was of such a nature that it ought to be given, there was, of course, full power to pay the whole of the expenses of bringing witnesses from Queenstown.

TRANSHIPMENT OF MAILS (KINGSTOWN AND HOLYHEAD).

Mr. MAURICE HEALY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, what the difficulty is in improving the system of transhipping the mails at Kingstown and Holyhead; what proposals on the subject have been made and considered; and whether the difficulty has arisen with the Railway Company, the Steam Packet Company or the Post Office?

Mr. HANBURY: The hon. Member will find the whole matter to which his questions relate set forth in the copy of correspondence between the Board of Trade, the Postmaster General and the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed on the 7th August 1890.

Mr. MAURICE HEALY called the right hon. Gentleman's attention to the fact that three times last year he said that the Post Office had the matter under consideration.

Mr. HANBURY said the hon. Member was quite correct; but the Post Office had not furnished them with information yet.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that the London and North Western Railway Company emphatically contradicted the Post Office in alleging that the Railway Company were at fault.

Mr. MAURICE HEALY asked if the hon. Gentleman could not get the materials to enable him to answer the Question.

Mr. HANBURY said that if the hon. Member would put the Question down again, he would give full information.

COUNTY COURT JUDGES (IRELAND).

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has any objection to give a Return of the names and dates of appointment of persons, if any, who have been appointed County Court Judges in Ireland during the past fifty years, for counties or boroughs in which they had previously been Parliamentary candidates?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: I cannot see what useful purpose would be served by such a Return, and I am unable, therefore, to agree to it.

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Quarter Sessions must open in County Down about the end of the present month ; whether an appointment of a County Court Judge in place of Judge Roche has yet been made, or has a locum tenens been appointed for the coming Sessions ; and whether he has any objection to give the name of the person appointed ?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR : The next Quarter Sessions for the County Down will open on the 31st instant, and it is probable a successor to Judge Roche will be appointed before that date. Until the appointment has been completed it would, as I have already stated, be irregular to announce the intention of Government.

LOAN FUND SOCIETIES (IRELAND).

Mr. MACNEILL : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—(1) whether he is aware that a number of treasurers of loan fund societies, working under the Charitable Act, 6 and 7 Vic. cap. 91, in the counties of Donegal, Fermanagh, and Tyrone, admitted before the Loan Fund Commission, which sat last year, that they received a gratuity of £5 each from the funds of their respective societies ; (2) whether it was pointed out to the said treasurers by the Commission that the receipt by them of such gratuities was illegal ; and (3) whether the money so illegally advanced has since been repaid by the treasurers concerned ; and, if not, what steps will be taken to compel the refunding of all such moneys so illegally advanced ?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR : The facts are as stated in the first two paragraphs. The amounts so advanced to treasurers have not been refunded, and the question as to the further steps to be taken in the matter is now under the consideration of the Loan Fund Board.

COLLIERY ACCIDENT (LLANSAMLET, GLAMORGAN).

Mr. DAVID RANDELL (Glamorgan, Gower) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that on the 10th February last a workman named Jordan fell down the pumping shaft at Gwern Colliery, Llansamlet, and that his body has not been recovered ; what attempts, if any, have been made to recover the body ; and what further steps are proposed to be taken in the matter ?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Sir Matthew White Ridley, Lancashire, Blackpool) : I have received a report from the Inspector of the District with regard to this accident. Efforts, he informs me, were made by grappling on the day of the accident and the three following days to recover the body. Subsequently, descents were made daily up till last Friday, to the surface of the water, and on one occasion a charge of dynamite was exploded in an adjoining shaft connected with the pumping shaft, in the hope of causing the body to rise. Descents will continue to be made for a few more weeks, but beyond this nothing, I am afraid, can be done.

CHECKWEIGHER (MINES REGULATION ACT, 1887).

Mr. B. PICKARD (York, W.R., Normanton) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has received from Mr. Peter Muir, Miners' Agent, of Glasgow, a letter complaining of the action of the Hindsward Pit, Old Cumnock, belonging to William Baird and Co., Limited, as having unduly interfered with the appointment of a checkweigher ; whether the men are within their right in taking a ballot in accordance with the Acts of 1887 and 1894 ; whether he is aware that the men did ballot for the appointment of a checkweigher : that intimation had been given to the manager to either attend himself or send someone on his behalf to see that the ballot was properly taken ; that the manager was informed of the election by ballot of a checkweighman ; and that when the person appointed presented himself for work the manager objected, and demanded the men to signify on the pit-head whether or not they wanted a checkweigher ; whether the manager is acting within the law by thus interfering in the appointment of a checkweigher, and in preventing the checkweigher acting for all the miners in the mine after a ballot has been taken; whether the manager is bound to provide reasonable shelter and proper facilities for the checkweigher so that he may take correctly the weight of the mineral gotten by the men; whether he will instruct Her Majesty's Inspector for that district to prosecute the manager for unduly interfering in the appointment by ballot of a checkweigher for this mine; and, whether he will take steps to enforce the weighing clauses of the Mines Acts in Scotland as they are carried out in England?

SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: I recently received a letter from Mr. Muir on the matter referred to, and was in hopes, from the report which I called for from the Inspector, that the difficulties which had arisen had been amicably settled. These difficulties were, I understood, not in connection with the taking of the ballot or the appointment of the checkweigher, but with the mode in which the appointment should be communicaied to the manager and the persons for whom the checkweigher is to act. As the hon. Member is well aware, the law on these points, as also on the question whether the facilities which are to be afforded to a checkweigher include the provision of shelter, is doubtful, and I am not prepared, on the information before me, to express an opinion that the manager was acting illegally. I have sent for a further report as to how matters stand at present. I do not understand the distinction which the hon. Member appears to draw between the enforcement of the Act in Scotland and in England.

BILLS OF LADING.

MR. W. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the Associated Chambers of Commerce at their meeting yesterday passed a resolution in favour of the Government introducing a Bill to amend the laws relating to bills of lading; and whether it is intended to bring in a Bill which will bring shipowners under the ordinary carriers' law?

MR. RITCHIE: I am aware of the resolution to which the hon. Member refers, and if it is brought before me formally it shall receive my careful consideration. I am not, however, prepared at present to propose any legislation on the subject.

CHANNEL TRANSIT OF LIVE STOCK (CONSIGNMENT NOTES).

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he is aware that the shipowners controlling the cross Channel transit of live stock compel consignors to sign consignment notes, which contract the carrying companies out of all liability, and whether the Government will take action to protect the shippers of live stock?

*MR. LONG: I believe that the statement contained in the Question of the hon. Member is correct in some cases; while it would also appear that on lines where full carriers' risks are accepted no greater care has been secured. I am most anxious to do what I can to improve the conditions of the traffic in question, but I am by no means clear that this result would be attained if I were to take action in the direction indicated.

PRISON COMMISSIONERS.

MR. E. H. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether effect has been given to the recommendation of the Departmental Committee on Prisons that the Commissioners should meet frequently as a board; how many meetings were held during the year 1896; and will the Commissioners in their future annual Reports record the number of meetings held in each year?

SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: Effect has been given to this recommendation, and the Commissioners when not absent on leave or visiting duty, meet frequently, in effect about once a fortnight. No object would I think be served by the publication of the Departmental details which the hon. Member desires and I do not propose to give them.

MUSSEL BEDS (BRITISH COASTS).

MR. CROMBIE: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he is aware that a large number of line fishermen round the British coasts, and especially the coast of Scotland, are mainly dependent for the pursual of their calling on a supply of mussels for bait; that, in consequence of the exhaustion of many of our home mussel beds, and the lack of culture of others, the supply of home mussels is both entirely inadequate and inferior in quality; and that the best mussels are being imported at great expense and inconvenience from Holland; and, whether Her Majesty's Government, with a view of remedying this, will institute an Inquiry into the causes of the deficiency of our home mussel beds, and the successful culture of mussels abroad?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.) said he was informed that the reports on the subject would shortly be published and circulated. After that the Government would consider what steps should be taken.

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY (IRELAND).

MR. PATRICK M'HUGH: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he can now say whether a Bill for the establishment of a Catholic University in Ireland will be introduced this Session by Her Majesty's Government?

*MR. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers that Question, may I ask whether he is aware that much dissatisfaction exists throughout the country at the contemplated establishment of a Roman Catholic University in Ireland, and that it is likely to break up the Unionist Party? [*Irish laughter.*]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I am perfectly well aware that, as my hon. Friend has just said, many people have been alarmed at what they regard as really the proposals of the Government, but I hope they will not make up their minds as to what those proposals are until they see them. ["Hear, hear!"] With regard to the Question on the Paper, I do not see how it will be possible to deal, in the course of the present Session, with any of the problems connected with higher education in Ireland.

CRETE.

MR. DILLON: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it is a fact that the Greek Vice Consul and all the Greek residents have been ordered to leave Canea; and, if so, for what reason, and under whose authority has this been done?

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Commander of the detachments landed in Canea from the Allied Fleets notified the Greek Vice Consul that he must leave Crete, and that until his departure he must consider himself a prisoner; whether the British Admiral in Cretan waters concurred in this action; and whether it was taken by the officer commanding the detachments landed as the representative of the Turkish Government and in accordance with Turkish law, international or municipal; and whether an Italian war vessel fired upon the Cretans surrounding Hierapetra?

*MR. CURZON: We have received no information from Canea with regard to the incidents concerning the Greek Vice Consul, but have telegraphed for information. An Italian ship, which had been dispatched to the relief of the beleaguered Mussulmans at Hierapetra, was compelled to fire in order to drive back the insurgents and Greek troops who attacked the town on Saturday last.

MR. DILLON: I shall repeat the Question to-morrow. I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he could state to the House who is in command of the mixed force landed at Selino; with what object it was landed; what instructions were given to the officer in command; and by whom were the instructions given?

*MR. CURZON: The mixed force was landed at Selino for the purpose of relieving Candano, which is seven miles inland—an operation which was successfully performed. I cannot answer the other questions, which seem to me to be of minor importance.

MR. MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, having regard to the fact that the Ottoman soldiery in Crete rose on the 2nd of March in mutiny and murdered their commanding officer, that the Acting Governor, in reply to the protests of the Consuls on the subject of the pillage of houses in Halepa, a suburb of Canea, by Turkish troops, replied that it could not be helped as the soldiers must pillage to live, it is still the intention of the Powers to insist on the withdrawal of Greek troops from Crete and the retention of Turkish troops in that island?

*Mr. CURZON: The hon. Member appears to be under some misapprehension. There has been no mutiny of the Ottoman soldiery in Crete but a mutiny of a detachment of Albanian Zaptiehs or police, stationed at Canea. I know nothing of the incident mentioned in the second part of the Question.

Mr. MACNEILL: Does the right hon. Gentleman never read the *Daily News?*

*Mr. CURZON: No, Sir, I do not. [*Laughter.*]

Sir ELLIS ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1) whether there are now some 30,000 Mussulman refugees, mostly women and children, at Candia, in great distress and threatened with famine; (2) whether the Foreign Consuls at Candia have proof that 400 Mussulmans have been massacred in the Sitia district, and that there are now wounded and mutilated Moslem women and children at Candia; and (3) what steps the Great Powers propose to take in order to restore the Cretan Mussulmans to their homes and land.

*Mr. CURZON: We have no definite information as to the number of Mussulman refugees at Candia, but Her Majesty's Consul telegraphed on the 5th inst. that there was scarcity of provisions there. He estimated those in want of relief in the island generally at from 25,000 to 30,000 people. The proportion at Candia can only be a very small fraction of that total. I cannot confirm either of the statements in the second paragraph. The restitution of the Mussulmans to their homes must depend upon the restoration of peace and order in the island.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what will be done with the Mussulman refugees from Kandamos and other places; and whether any provision can be made for their support until they can return to their homes? I should like to add a question, whether he has any information that Sir Alfred Biliotti has effected the relief at Candano of Mussulmans after two visits at very great risk to himself?

*Mr. CURZON: Yes, Sir; that is the information we have received, which I have previously given, and which has appeared in the Press. I should like to say in that connection that I do not think it would be possible to exaggerate the services which have been rendered by Her Majesty's Consul. There appears to be a consensus of opinion that it was to his personal bravery, and even heroism—for he undoubtedly risked his own life [*cheers*]—that the success of the operation is due. I hope I am justified in adding the congratulations of this House to those which the Government would desire to offer to Sir Alfred Biliotti for the services he has rendered, not merely to the Government, but to Crete and to the cause of humanity. ["Oh!" *and cheers.*]

Mr. DILLON: On a point of order—["Oh!"] The right hon. Gentleman is entitled to offer his own congratulations, but he is not entitled to offer the congratulations of the Members of this House who entirely disapprove of the whole action. ["Order, order!"]

Mr. MACNEILL: And to make a speech about it. [*Irish cheers.*]

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Is this House to be asked to make a grant—

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! That does not arise out of the Question.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: The Question on the Paper is, whether any provision can be made for the Mussulman refugees from Candano. Is it proposed to ask the House for a grant for that purpose?

*Mr. SPEAKER: I thought the hon. Member was asking something about the Consul.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: No, Sir; it arises out of the question put by the hon. Gentleman opposite. Is there to be a grant by this House in support of the Mussulmans which was refused in the case of the Christians in Armenia? [*Cheers.*]

*Mr. CURZON: I do not know what the hon. Member is referring to. I have not yet answered the question of the hon. Gentleman.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: To put the matter right, I again ask the question.

*MR. CURZON: We have not yet heard from the British Admiral or from Her Majesty's Consul on the subject. I shall be glad to communicate any information when we receive it.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Has the British Consul any authority to involve the taxpayers of this country in the cost of relieving these Mussulmans, when we did not relieve the Christians?

[No answer was given.]

SIR W. HARCOURT (Monmouthshire, W.): I desire to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it is the fact, as stated in the Press, that the Greek Government, in addition to their formal reply to the Note of the Powers, have made a communication to Her Majesty's Government and the other Powers to the effect that Greece is prepared to recognise the temporary suzerainty of the Sultan, to withdraw their fleet from Crete, and place the Greek forces in that island under the control of the Powers for the restoration of order, stipulating that the Powers will ultimately leave to the Cretan people the decision of the question of autonomy or annexation to Greece, and whether such statement is in substance correct? ["Hear, hear!"]

*MR. CURZON: When I answered the right hon. Gentleman's question yesterday afternoon at 5.30 no further communication or Note had been received from the Greek Government. About half an hour later such a communication was made verbally at the Foreign Office by the Greek *Chargé d'Affaires*. It will be laid with the other Papers, but I am afraid that it will possibly delay their appearance till to-morrow. They would otherwise have been in the hands of hon. Members this afternoon. I may add that the nature of the communication is not quite accurately described in the Question of the right hon. Gentleman. ["Hear, hear!"]

SIR W. HARCOURT: I venture to urge on the right hon. Gentleman that it is of great importance that the attitude of Greece on this matter should be known. [*Cheers.*] Therefore, although there may be some small inaccuracies or divergences from the statement I have received, I would ask the right hon. Gentleman to state whether or not in substance these proposals on the part of the Greek Government are as I have stated? ["Hear, hear!"]

*MR. CURZON: It is rather difficult to say exactly what "in substance" means; but I may perhaps put it in this way—that there are substantial inaccuracies in the statement. [*Cries of* "What are they?"] We should have been very glad to have laid the Greek communication before the House this evening if we could, but, of course, permission had to be asked from the Greek *Chargé d'Affaires* himself. A messenger was sent to his office with the object of securing that assent, but up to 8 o'clock he had not been found. That is the explanation of the delay. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. DILLON: Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether his attention has been directed to the message which the British Admiral desired *The Times* Correspondent to telegraph to this country to the effect that the insurgents had never received the warning of the Admirals before the recent bombardment? ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. R. PIERPOINT (Warrington): I also desire to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it is a fact, as stated in this morning's papers, that Rear Admiral Harris has ascertained from the insurgent chiefs at Akrotiri that the proclamation of the Powers forbidding the insurgents to attack Canea and the other towns, and the Admirals' offer to send doctors after the bombardment, had never been communicated to the insurgents, although the Greek Commodore Reineck had been intrusted by the Admiral with the two Notes, and had been requested to communicate them to the chiefs; and whether the English, French, and Italian Admirals were all convinced that the Notes had not been transmitted by Commodore Reineck? ["Hear, hear!"]

*MR. CURZON: Yes, Sir, I have seen the statement in *The Times* this morning, the substance of which is borne out by a telegram we have since received from the British Admiral this morning, to the effect that, in company with the French and Italian Admirals, he had landed at Akrotiri to interview the insurgent chiefs, and that the latter had denied having received the warning sent through the Greek Commodore, and also denied knowledge of the offer of medical assistance which had been on three occasions tendered by the representatives of the Powers. ["Hear!"]

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Is it not the fact that these statements were made after the Greek Admiral had left the shores of Crete? ["Hear, hear!"]

*Mr. CURZON: Yes, because it was not until yesterday that the Admirals had the interview with the insurgent chiefs. ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. T. M. HEALY: The Greek Admiral was away all the same. [*Cries of* "Order!"]

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether the Greek Commodore had undertaken the transmission of this message?

*Mr. CURZON: I cannot say.

Mr. DILLON: I presume the right hon. Gentleman will see that in future, at least, there is absolute certainty that the insurgents are warned before fire is opened upon them.

[No answer was given.]

Mr. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): Arising out of the Question of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition, will the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs answer that part of the Question which referred to the Turkish suzerainty?

*Mr. CURZON: I think it would be unsafe for me to answer from memory. I have not a copy of the communication which the Greek *Chargé d'Affaires* made with me. It was sent off at once to the printers.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I gave the right hon. Gentleman early notice of this Question—as early as 12 o'clock to-day. I am sorry to press him, but I regard it as a matter of vital importance that it should be known to Europe what are the conditions and the terms which Greece has proposed. [*Cheers.*]

Mr. J. H. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy Burghs): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, in view of the importance of this matter, the right hon. Gentleman will hold out any hope that the Greek Minister, who is known to be in close proximity to the House, will be found, and that he will be able to give us an answer on the adjournment of the House to-night? ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. CURZON: I really do not know that there is any very considerable difference, as far as hon. Members are concerned, between 12 o'clock to-night and the first thing to-morrow morning. [*Cheers and laughter, and Opposition cries of* "Oh!"]

Sir W. HARCOURT: But if given here to-night the information will be in the Press and given to the world to-morrow, while if it is kept back until 4 o'clock to-morrow it will be a very different thing indeed. ["Hear, hear!"] The mere fact that it has been sent to the printers does not prevent the right hon. Gentleman from getting the document back from them. [*Cheers.*]

Mr. CURZON: There will not be the slightest objection to giving it if I am informed before midnight that the consent of the Greek *Chargé d'Affaires* has taken obtained. ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. STEVENSON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that a few hours ago, when he was sending messengers to seek for the Greek *Chargé d'Affaires*, that Gentleman was in the Lobby of this House in search of the right hon. Gentleman? [*Laughter.*]

Mr. PIERPOINT: Why did not the hon. Member tell the right hon. Gentleman?

Mr. CURZON: I was not aware of the fact.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS BILL.

Considered in Committee.

[The Chairman of Ways and Means, Mr. J. W. Lowther, in the Chair.]

[Progress, 10th March.—Eighth Day.]

Clause 1,—

AID GRANT TO VOLUNTARY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

"(1) For aiding Voluntary Schools there shall be annually paid out of moneys provided by Parliament an aid grant, not exceeding in the aggregate five shillings per scholar for the whole number of scholars in those schools.

"(2) The aid grant shall be distributed by the Education Department to such Voluntary Schools and in such manner and amounts as the

Department think best for the purpose of helping necessitous schools and increasing their efficiency, due regard being had to the maintenance of voluntary subscriptions.

"(3) If associations of schools are constituted in such manner in such areas and with such governing bodies representative of the managers as are approved by the Education Department, there shall be allotted to each association while so approved,

"(*a*) a share of the aid grant, to be computed according to the number of scholars in the schools of the association at the rate of five shillings per scholar, or, if the Department fix different rates for town and country schools respectively (which they are hereby empowered to do), then at those rates; and

"(*b*) a corresponding share of any sum which may be available out of the aid grant after distribution has been made to unassociated schools.

"(4) The share so allotted to each such association shall be distributed as aforesaid by the Education Department after consulting the governing body of the association, and in accordance with any scheme prepared by that body which the Department for the time being approve.

"(5) The Education Department may exclude a school from any share of the aid grant which it might otherwise receive if, in the opinion of the Department, it unreasonably refuses or fails to join such an association, but the refusal or failure shall not be deemed unreasonable if the majority of the schools in the association belong to a religious denomination to which the school in question does not itself belong.

"(6) The Education Department may require as a condition of a school receiving a share of the aid grant that the accounts of the receipts and expenditure of the school shall be annually audited in accordance with the regulations of the Department."

"(7) The decision of the Education Department upon any question relating to the distribution or allotment of the aid grant, including the question whether an association is or is not in conformity with this Act, and whether a school is a town or a country school, shall be final."

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS called on Mr. Lambert, in whose name stood the first Amendment upon the Paper. [*Loud expressions of protest on the Opposition side of the House.*]

MR. T. LOUGH (Islington, W.): I beg to move, Sir, "That you do report progress and ask leave to sit again." [*Opposition cheers and Ministerial cries of* "Oh!" *and* "Divide!"]

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: I decline to put that Question. Mr. Lambert.

MR. J. CALDWELL (Lanark, Mid), who rose amid loud cries of "Order," said: On the point of order, Sir——

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: I have already told the hon. Member that I decline to put that Question. Mr. Lambert.

MR. CALDWELL: But on the point of order, Sir, is it not the usual practice, when the House has been kept sitting up to the dinner hour and the Chairman has taken the Chair, for the Chairman to go out for half an hour? [*Cheers, and Ministerial cries of* "Order!"]

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: Order, order! The hon. Member is in error, for I myself remember an occasion when that practice did not obtain. [*Cries of* "Once!"] It is not an invariable practice. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. CALDWELL: Is it not the fact?

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: I really cannot allow the hon. Gentleman to argue the point with me. I call upon Mr. Lambert.

MR. DALZIEL: On the point of order, Sir, may I ask you whether there is any precedent, except one occasion, when it was by a general arrangement with the House to enable the House to rise early, for Members not being allowed to take their dinners? ["Hear, hear!"]

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: I have told the hon. Member that I myself remember an occasion of the kind. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. DALZIEL: By special arrangement?

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: No, by no arrangement whatever. Mr. Lambert.

SIR W. HARCOURT, who rose amid loud Ministerial cries of "Oh!" and "Divide!": I would ask you, Sir, whether it is not possible to consult the convenience of the House in this matter. [*Cheers.*] There are a great many hon. Members who, like myself, have been sitting here for many hours for the purpose of asking questions which have lasted an hour. Many hon. Members, like myself, have, consequently, been unable to obtain the ordinary refreshment which the common Rules of the House usually allow us to secure. ["Hear, hear!"]

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: There is no particular reason why the House should be adjourned for half an hour, and I may say that I believe that if I were to consult the general convenience, the House would decide in favour of our proceeding. ["Hear, hear!"] I call upon Mr. Lambert.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): I would ask the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury whether——

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: Order, order! There is no question before the Committee. I call upon Mr. Lambert. ["Hear, hear!"] If the hon. Member does not rise I shall pass him over. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. G. LAMBERT (Devon, South Molton): I beg to move "That the Chairman do now leave the Chair."

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: I will put that Question at once, in order that the Committee may decide it. [*Cheers.*]

SIR W. HARCOURT, who rose amid loud Ministerial cries of "Order!" and "Oh!" and Opposition cheers, said,—But, Mr. Lowther, I also appeal to the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House——

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: Order, order! Under the Standing Order of the House, I am empowered, if I think fit, to put the Question at once, and that accordingly I do. [*Cheers.*]

SIR W. HARCOURT, who again rose amid loud Opposition cheers, and Ministerial cries of "Order!" and "Divide," said: Mr. Lowther, I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House ——[*Loud cries of* "Order!" *and an* HON. MEMBER, "Monstrous!"]

MR. DALZIEL: Order yourself. [*Ministerial cries of* "Oh!" *and* "Divide!"]

The Committee divided—Ayes, 88; Noes, 174.—(Division List, No. 93.)

MR. DALZIEL: I wish to ask you, Sir, whether you would be willing to receive a proposition that you do now leave the Chair for half-an-hour. [*Ministerial cries of* "No, no!"]

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: The Committee has just decided by two to one that it should proceed.

MR. LAMBERT moved, in Subsection (3), after the words "in such areas and with such," to insert the word "elective." He said that, although he was in a somewhat exhausted state—[*laughter*]—he thought that the case for his Amendment would be more than sufficient to make up for his weakness. The First Lord of the Treasury said last night that many of the Amendments moved on the Opposition side of the House were frivolous, and ought not to have been proposed. He believed the right hon. Gentleman did not read the newspapers, but he wished he had undergone the penance of reading the first few sentences of the leading article in *The Times*, in which it was said that the Amendments of the day before were not a waste of time, and had led to an interesting discussion, and that further information might well be asked for from the Government as to the formation of these associations. The Committee had decided that these associations should be formed for the purposes of the Bill, and that being so, it was essential that they should do their utmost to make them a success. Their formation was, as was admitted by the First Lord of the Treasury, somewhat of an experiment, and he thought there ought to be some elective element in them. Speaking on the Second Reading of the Education Bill last year, the First Lord of the Treasury said:—

> "No principle seems to me more fundamental, or that we should strive more earnestly to carry out, than the principle which gives to those who have the general interests of any community, be it national or local, the whole control of the finances by which their schemes are supported."

That was precisely the principle he wished to carry out—namely, that some kind of elective local authorities should be the bodies by which this money should be distributed. In his opinion, the associations would be more permanent, and would exercise greater influence if the members were elected than if they were merely co-opted or nominated. He would probably be told that these bodies would be governed by the Education Department, but how could that Department exercise any effective control over their constitution? The inspectors of the Department had no special qualifications to act as critics of the composition of these authorities. In the circumstances the Department would be almost compelled to approve of them. He held that it would be contrary to all precedent if an authority having to advise as to the expenditure of public money were to contain no elective element. These bodies ought not to consist merely of co-opted or nominated irresponsible persons. The Department, he would point out, would not be able to disregard their advice, for, as the Vice President of the Council said last year, it was impossible for a central Department to discriminate between schools. Had any estimate been made of the cost of the staff of these advisory bodies?

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS said that that point did not arise on the question whether they were to be elective or not.

MR. LAMBERT contended that if the associations were to discriminate between schools they ought to have the strength of elective bodies so that they might overbear greedy managers clamouring, without justification, for a share of the grant. If there should be any want of confidence among subscribers in the impartiality of the associations their contributions would diminish. The whole Wesleyan body and the teachers had opposed the plan of the Government. He trusted, therefore, that the Government would agree to the introduction of some elective representative of the parents or of the parish or district councils.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.) congratulated the hon. Member on his having acquitted himself so well of his task in spite of the difficult circumstances under which he spoke—[*laughter*]—and to which he had alluded. There was, however, one deficiency in the hon. Member's speech. Although he expressed a general desire for election, he had not said whom he wanted to elect or on what principle the election ought to take place. The hon. Member expressed only an abstract view as to the proper method of constituting the advisory bodies, and beyond the fact that he wished the election to be an election of people who were not managers of schools—[Mr. LAMBERT: "I did not say that they should not be managers."] Well, he did not understand what was the hon. Member's plan.

MR. LAMBERT explained that what he had intended to say was that the parents should be represented, and also the local authorities, if that should be possible, but that the Government would doubtless be the best judges of the way in which the elective element should be introduced.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY was glad that the hon. Member should think that there was one matter connected with education on which the Government would be the best judges. ["Hear, hear!" *and laughter.*] The hon. Member wanted the Committee to give an abstract vote on the subject of election, but he was very vague in his view of who should be the constituents of the body to be elected. He must oppose the introduction of the word "elective" upon this, among other grounds—that it would tie them down to some method of creating a representative advisory body consisting of certain individuals, who would vote under certain conditions at certain times and places, according to some of the methods with which the system of local government had made them familiar. In conformity with the general policy which he advocated the last time this subject was under discussion, he strongly deprecated the Committee declaring that those bodies should be elective. Representative bodies they must be; elective bodies he thought they ought not to be, or, at least, need not be. Of course, if the managers of schools were to be invited under this Bill to form themselves into associations, and desired to have some elective system by which their views should be represented on the association, he need hardly say that the Education Department, as far as the Government had any influence on it, would throw no objection in the way. But to render it absolutely necessary that all the forms of election were to be gone through before these representative bodies were brought into working order, appeared to him to be inimical to the smooth working of the scheme; and he should be sorry to see the Committee adopt it. It was possible, for example, that the schools represented would be of such a number that no election at all was necessary. A number of managers of each school might meet together and form an association; on the other hand, it might happen, without a formal election, that the managers of the various schools should signify to the Education Department that they were entirely satisfied with the representative body which should be created by some less formal methods. Why should they not carry out that policy if they chose to do so? If the hon. Member, in addition to requiring that the association should consist of members elected as distinguished from members representative, should desire to have parents, ratepayers, local authorities, county councils, parish councils, district councils, and subscribers all represented, then, quite apart from the arguments he had adduced, he should offer the strongest resistance in his power to the suggestion he had made.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said that he was surprised at the speech of the right hon. Gentleman. The Bill contained terms which were impossible of definition, which were much too wide, and which were not applicable to the purpose in view. It left these questions to the discretion of the Department, and he did not think that his hon. Friend was in the least bound to say what should be the constituent elements to elect these associations. If the term "elective" was inserted their desire was to see the associations representative—[The First Lord of the Treasury: "Of whom?"]—of those who were interested in these schools, and to have some element of election as their foundation. [*Ironical laughter.*] The associations, as they would be constituted, would have no element of popular strength or support, and the desire was to place them on a more popular basis than at present. As they were not allowed to define anything in the Bill, the Department should be left to decide, in regard to the different associations, on what particular elective basis they should be founded. They should not be mere clerical bodies, but they should look to the real interests of educational efficiency. He supported the Amendment.

Mr. HENRY BROADHURST (Leicester) insisted that the associations should not consist of one religious faith and one class. In many of the localities which would be affected by the Bill, the Dissenting bodies were in the great majority, but those who would manage this grant of money would undoubtedly be the class managing the Church schools. If the Government excluded one large portion of the community from a share in the Administration of the fund, universal dissatisfaction would be created, and in the end the Government would be the sufferers. There would be no difficulty in providing means by which Nonconformists might be elected; the machinery could be easily provided by the Education Department. If that Department should be incapable of undertaking the duty of arranging such a simple piece of machinery, then the Local Government Board would come to their aid and would soon remove the difficulty, providing a scheme for the representation of all classes in the management of this educational endowment fund, or rather this Church schools endowment fund. He had not mentioned the county councils, the district councils, or parish councils for a few minutes, since he heard the Leader of the House refer to these bodies in a tone of horror and alarm. The right hon. Gentleman shrugged his shoulders at the mere mention of urban and rural district councils, but surely he should not be ashamed of the children of his own Party, those young representative bodies that were giving general satisfaction throughout the country, doing useful work in an economical manner. There was no cause for the alarm his manner and remarks seemed to convey. The chairman, vice-chairman, or other member of a parish council, would be a satisfactory nomination to join an association for the administration of these great sums of money. If there was one Amendment on the Paper which, from its reasonable character, should claim the favourable attention of the Government, it was this Amendment. If a minority must have any recognition at all, this was an occasion for it. If the right hon. Gentleman persisted in his refusal to accept the Amendment, then he thought they might once for all abandon all hope of inserting any Amendment in the Bill. ["Hear, hear!"] No doubt that cheer represented the opinion of the Government. If the Government had made up their minds that there should be no Amendment, let them say so at once, and put the minority in the House out of their misery. [*Laughter.*] The minority offered no opposition to the Bill. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] Not a word had been said against the granting of money for purposes of education, they had only endeavoured to improve and strengthen the Measure, and they appealed for all classes to have a fair share and equal voice in the management. If the right hon. Gentleman meant to refuse every Amendment, then let him get up and say it was no use proposing any Amendment for he would refuse them point-blank, or to listen to any argument, however reasonable. Then the Opposition might consider whether their time might be better occupied than in fighting in this forlorn hope. He again appealed to the right hon. Gentleman, were not all portions of the community equally entitled to representation on these associations with the Established Church people?

Mr. W. ALLAN (Gateshead) asked for a little light on a subject which appeared to him to be very dim. Would the right hon. Gentleman tell the Committee whether these associations were to be the expression of the opinions of the various religious denominations who would benefit by the combination? Would the associations consist of the freely-elected representatives of the religious denominations who would benefit by the grant? That was a point he would like cleared up, and upon this, yesterday, the right hon. Gentleman's answers seemed rather cloudy and involved.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: These bodies are to be the representatives of the managers.

Mr. ALLAN: Are they to be freely elected representatives of the denominations?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: Of the existing managers of schools.

Mr. ALLAN said that so far helped him over his difficulty. Then he turned to the speech of the hon. Member who had just sat down, one phrase of which he noted. The hon. Member abandoned all hope of amendment of the Bill, and asked, "Why go on?" He repeated that question. Why go on with Amendments if they were to waste time and make no progress? Personally he objected to sitting there day after day making no progress. ["Hear, hear!"] If no Amendment were to be accepted, why go on? Repeating the words of the hon. Member, the time of the House might be better occupied, and he was there for business, not for all talk and no work. He represented a Board School constituency, and in expectation that the Government would lay on the Table a Bill for helping necessitous Board Schools. He was there to ask his Liberal and Radical friends to give every assistance towards getting that Bill through, and with that Bill the time of the House might be better occupied. ["Hear!"]

*Mr. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) humbly echoed the appeal of the hon. Member to hon. Gentlemen on the Benches opposite to give up moving Amendments. The hon. Gentleman's appeal was founded on reason, and he could not help saying for his own part—though, of course, he did not know what the tactics should be of those who opposed a Bill—that there was great want of knowledge shown of the art of obstruction in the course now being pursued. It pained him to see Amendments moved which were in themselves incomprehensible, and supported by speeches which were incoherent. This Amendment was to render the representative body of managers, which were to be approved by the Education Department, elective. But elected by whom, or how? The Amendment was not only not sense, but it was not even suggestive, nor was it explained by any subsequent Amendment that he had discovered. The First Lord of the Treasury, speaking with his usual felicity and good humour, had, with his amiability, "filled the hungry with good things"—[*laughter*]—and he was grateful to him for having pointed out the very important difference there is in being elective and being representative. Some of the best and most useful institutions of the country were not elective, though representative. Take a jury, for instance, that was extremely representative, but it was not elective, it was representative of the whole community; and that was the great virtue of a jury, it was representative though not elective. The Sovereign was representative. A Judge was representative, the Speaker was elective, but the Chairman of Committees was representative. [*Laughter.*] Therefore he conceived the hon. Member who wished these bodies to be elective and did not wish them to be representative erred, for it was better they should be representative than elective. Of course, were these words introduced as proposed, and stood alone, the matter would not be altered one atom, or whether they had a body elected, chosen, or adopted in totality it certainly had to be subjected to the approval of the Education Department.

He would, therefore, point out to hon. Members opposite that not only was the Amendment as it stood inconsistent, and that it had been rendered incoherent by the speeches with which it had been advocated, but that if passed it would be useless for the purpose for which it was intended.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY (Montrose Burghs) observed that the hon. Member for Lynn Regis had advanced a great many propositions which could hardly be sustained as to what constituted a representative. He had said, for instance, that a Judge was representative, and he presumed so was a Bishop. [*Opposition cheers.*] But in his remonstrances against what he had called obstruction on the Opposition side of the House, the hon. Member seemed to have forgotten that this was a deliberative Assembly. When he taunted the Opposition with the prolongation of discussion on the various sections of the clause, the hon. Member seemed to have forgotten a Bill on which he himself had taken a very active part.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: I did not in the least complain of the prolongation of discussion, but only of inartistic prolongation. [*Laughter.*]

Mr. J. MORLEY confessed he did not know the distinction between artistic and inartistic prolongation, but was bound to say the hon. Member in the last Parliament gave them ample opportunities of distinguishing between artistic and inartistic—[*laughter*]—on a memorable Bill in the last Parliament. [*Cries of* "Question!"] Hon. Gentlemen opposite called "Question" and he quite understood why. Of course this was relevant, and therefore they were afraid to hear it. [*Opposition cheers and cries of* "Order!"] It was perfectly in order, otherwise the Chairman would have intervened.

*The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS: Of course the discussion has gone a little way from the point of the Amendment, but I think the right hon. Gentleman is entitled to reply to the criticisms that have been made by the hon. Member. After that reply has been made I think the Committee should resume the Debate on the Amendment. [*Laughter.*]

Mr. J. MORLEY said he would in a sentence or two reply to the hon. Member for Lynn Regis. They had been six or seven nights in Committee on this Bill. but on the Home Rule Bill the first clause alone occupied five nights. On the third clause two nights were expended upon a discussion to postpone the clause, and then eight days were devoted to the third clause itself, after which the closure was moved. ["Hear, hear!"]

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: We have been nine nights on half a clause. [*Ministerial cheers.*]

Mr. J. MORLEY said that of course the clauses of the Home Rule Bill were clauses, but this was a Bill put into a clause. [*Cheers.*] There were seven sub-sections, each of which, in a Bill framed upon the ordinary principles upon which Bills were presented to the House, would have been a separate clause by itself. ["Hear, hear!"] The right hon. Gentleman was well aware of that, and if the Opposition had brought in a Bill framed in this manner he would have been the very first to protest. [*Cheers.*] The fourth clause of the Home Rule Bill took nine nights. ["Hear, hear!"] On the Parish Councils Bill six nights were devoted to the first clause. They had spent seven nights, it appeared, upon the first clause of the present Bill, and he submitted, when the hon. Member for Lynn Regis taxed the Opposition with undue prolongation of discussion, he had entirely forgotten the precedent of the conduct of his own Party, and also of his own personal conduct. [*Cheers.*]

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: I do not charge the right hon. Gentleman and his Party with undue prolongation. I charged them with foolish and inartistic prolongation. [*Laughter.*]

*The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS: Order, order! I think it would be desirable now to leave this topic. ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. J. MORLEY said he felt he had sufficiently disposed of the taunt of the hon. Member. ["Hear, hear!"] Upon the point of the Amendment he wished to ask the First Lord a rather simple but pretty obvious question. The right hon. Gentleman rather shifted his ground in his answer to the hon. Gentleman who moved the Amendment. He said that it would be very hard to tie down the associations by such rules as, for example, they should constitute themselves upon an elective principle. But that argument involved a departure from the argument he had been using throughout these discussions—namely, that the Education Department would make its own regulations, and, therefore, the associations would only have a secondary voice in the matter. The Bill said that these bodies were to be representative of the managers, but the question was upon what principle this representation was to be decided. The right hon. Gentleman said that all the managers were not to be upon the association; but what did representation mean? A representative body must either be elective or selective. ["Hear, hear!"] They contended that the principle ought to be elective and not selective. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman would kindly explain upon which principle the associations were to constitute themselves, and what was the principle upon which the Education Department was going to recommend the framing of this scheme.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said there were two possibilities raised by the rather vague Amendment before them. One was as to whether there should be an elective element in these associations, the election not being by the managers, but by somebody, be they parents or be they ratepayers, or other persons outside. To that possibility the Government entertained the strongest objection. The other question was: given the association was to represent only the managers, was that representation to be by election or not? His answer was quite plain: it might be by election or it might not necessarily be by election. As he understood the matter, the schools would be invited to form these associations, and they would, no doubt, suggest the manner in which the associations were to be formed. The Education Department would then have to judge whether, in their view, the association was representative of the managers, and, if they thought it was, no doubt they would assent to the association if in other respects it seemed suitable. [*Cheers.*]

MR. SAMUEL SMITH (Flintshire) said these associations would simply be associations of Anglican clergy. [*Ministerial cries of* "No" *and* "Divide."] These men would elect themselves. The controlling power would be the extreme Church party, not the moderate party; and these associations would have the power of penalising the schools which were conducted in a very moderate way at present, and to which Nonconformists did not object. He would like to give one or two questions from a catechism which represented the views of the extreme party. [*Cries of* "Question."]

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS said the only question now before the Committee was whether the governing bodies of these associations were to be elected or not.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH said he would, of course, obey that ruling. The only point he wished to bring out was that the tendency of these associations, composed of extreme Ritualists, would be gradually to stimulate the violent anti-Protestant teaching with a view of stamping out Dissent. As the Government refused to adopt any suggestion from that side of the House, it was a farce to carry on the discussion. [*Cheers.*]

SIR FRANK LOCKWOOD (York) thought it was really time for some one to enter a protest against what he ventured to term the negative attitude which the Government had chosen to assume. [*Cheers.*] The First Lord of the Treasury had, no doubt in an amiable spirit, criticised the scheme of his hon. Friend who moved the Amendment; but what they had the right to have before them was the scheme of the Government. [*Cheers.*] The right hon. Gentleman had told them that the speeches made on that side of the House were an object lesson as to the grave difficulties with which the Government had to deal in the creation of these associations. Yes; but it was an object lesson for the Government, whose duty it was to have considered these difficulties before they embarked upon this Bill. [*Cheers.*] If the right hon. Gentleman would not tell them in distinct terms what the Education Department would do in connection with this matter when the Bill became law, he would venture to tell them why he did not do so. It was because the Education Department and those in charge of this Bill were at arm's length. [*Cheers and Ministerial laughter.*] He should be glad to hear from the Vice President of the Council or from the Attorney General—if the hon. and learned Gentleman had really got any view upon the matter—what the Education Department anticipated would be the principles upon which those associations would be created. The Committee were told that the whole responsibility for the creation and constitution of those bodies would rest on the Education Department, and yet the responsible Minister for that Department sat dumb in his seat and gave no indication to the Committee of the principles that would guide the Department in the matter. [*Cheers.*]

*Mr. R. W. PERKS (Lincolnshire, Louth) said the question had been asked, what was the use of discussing the Bill in face of the manifest intention of the Government not to accept any Amendment? He could tell the hon. Member for Gateshead that one advantage of debating the Bill was that it enabled Members to declare the side on which they ranged themselves in regard to the great question of Education—["hear, hear!"] —and another advantage was that it afforded opportunities to constituencies to communicate to their Members their assent to or their dissent from the votes given by those Members. [*Cheers.*] The question they had to consider was whether the managers, parents, and the scholars of these elementary schools should have some guarantee that these representative bodies should be elected. Yesterday, when the First Lord of the Treasury announced the compact which the Government had entered into with the Roman Catholic community, he stated, in response to the honourable Member for East Mayo, that it would be competent for the governing bodies of the different Churches outside the Church of England, to form one association for the schools of those bodies. The right hon. Gentleman had said, for instance, the Roman Catholic body might appoint one association for the whole 900 schools in connection with that Church. That association would be submitted to the Education Department for its approval. What had the Education Department to satisfy themselves about? Simply that the association was representative of the managers. The Department had not to satisfy itself at all as to whether it was an elective body. That would be a gross injustice in the case of some Roman Catholic schools. In the North of England there were several Roman Catholic schools to which from 40 to 50 Nonconformist children were forced to go, and yet, in the governing body formed to control those Roman Catholic schools, there was no guarantee in the Bill that the elective principle would be adopted, and that the parents of those Nonconformist children would have a voice in the management of the schools. Then there was the case of the Wesleyan Methodists, who had altogether 500 schools in this country. Those schools were controlled by the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, which was the chief governing body of that Church, assisted by the Wesleyan Education Committee. They would probably propose to form two associations. An association might be proposed for the acceptance of the Education Department which the Conference might say was representative of the managers. But the managers might take an entirely different view, and in the absence of the Amendment it would be left absolutely in the control of the Education Department to say whether these associations were representative of the managers or whether they were not. Take the county of Lincolnshire, a Division of which he represented. There were in that county upwards of 400 Church of England Schools. There was the strongest possible divergence of opinion on ecclesiastical questions in the county of Lincolnshire. Some clergy were extremely evangelical, others were just the opposite. Would there be one association or two associations for the county of Lincolnshire? The managers of those schools would have no assurance that they would be represented properly on the associations. That would materially affect some of the parishes in Lincolnshire. In many parishes there were 60, and in some 80, per cent. Nonconformist children attending the schools, and, in the case of one school of 122 children, there was not a single child of an Anglican Churchman at all in the whole school, although it was a school of the Church of England. That was not at all an isolated instance in the Division he represented. There were four or five Anglican schools with which he was acquainted in which not one child was the child of a member of the Church of England. There should therefore be some guarantee that the governing bodies should be elected and should be representative of the views of parents, children, and subscribers of the schools. He should say that he did not entertain the gloomy views that had been expressed by the Member for the Flint Boroughs as to the future of Dissent in this country if the Bill were passed. The Dissenters of this country were strong enough to take care of themselves. He opposed the Bill because he believed it to be an unjust one, and not because he thought the Bill would do any harm to the Dissenters. At the next election they would be powerful enough to sweep this Measure straight from the Statute-book.

MR. SAMUEL EVANS (Glamorganshire, Mid) said that this Amendment was very important for many reasons. Important functions were to be intrusted to these associations. They were to guide and advise the Department in the distribution of the grant. But if they were to be really representative bodies there must be some sort of election to them. The Bill left the manner of their formation absolutely vague ; and in the present day it was a strong thing to say that some one should represent some one else without any sort of election. The three cases cited by the hon. Member for King's Lynn were not fortunate. The Judges represented no one, unless it were the Sovereign. Juries represented only themselves, because they had no responsibility but to themselves ; and who was represented by the Chairman of Committees when the right hon. Gentleman occupied the Chair?

MR. W. ALLAN said that he wished to make a personal statement with regard to the remarks of the hon. Member for the Louth Division (Mr. Perks). The hon. Member had entirely mistaken what he said, which was simply an echo of the words of the hon. Member for Leicester. And as to the assent or dissent of his constituents, he thought that the hon. Member's remarks were quite uncalled for. He could not reconcile such a gross attack upon himself by the hon. Member with the vote which the hon. Member gave last year on the Agricultural Rating Bill, whereby two millions were given to the landlords of this country.

*MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Nottingham, Mansfield) said that these discussions were of great use, in spite of what the hon. Member for Gateshead had said, because they were making it clearer to the country day by day what the Bill really was, and what the views of the Government were as to the way in which their Bill was to be administered. The dissatisfaction with these proposals would be increased if these associations were not to be formed on representative principles. From the statement made by the First Lord of the Treasury on the previous evening, it appeared that these associations would be formed on denominational lines, so that our national education would become more denominational than ever. The laity would accordingly require protection, and they could only get it by the adoption of the principle of representation. If that were refused, and this Measure were to be worked for ecclesiastical rather than educational purposes, the laity would be disgusted, and the cause of education would suffer.

SIR JOHN BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich) said the positive and determined refusal of the Government to allow the smallest introduction of the elective principle into this clause made the arguments so often used, with absolute sincerity by hon. Gentlemen opposite, that parents ought to be allowed perfect freedom of choice as to the religious education their children received, are absolute and hollow mockery. From time to time they heard of Protestant children being driven into the Roman Catholic Schools, and he would ask hon. Gentlemen opposite to realise how hard that hit the parents of the Protestant children. The action of the Government would tend to intensify this course, and he warned hon. Gentlemen opposite that if the persistence of the Government in refusing to introduce the elective principle into the clause was encouraged by them, they would receive an answer from their constituents which would not be a pleasant one for them or the Government.

Mr. ABEL THOMAS (Carmarthen, E.), and Mr. HUMPHREYS-OWEN (Montgomery) rose to continue the Debate, when

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY claimed to move "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided :—Ayes, 249 ; Noes, 104.—(Division List, No. 94.)

Question put acordingly, "That the word 'elective' be there inserted."

The Committee divided :—Ayes, 105 ; Noes, 266.—(Division List, No. 95.)

Mr. SAMUEL EVANS moved in Subsection (3), after the word "bodies," to insert the words "consisting of a number of persons in equal proportion for each school in the association." He said that the object of the Amendment was to secure that, whatever the number of managers or children, there should be the same representation so as to secure the interests of a small necessitous school.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY said that the hon. Member suggested in his Amendment that the representation of small schools on the associations should be the same, and have the same weight as that of the large schools. He did not know that the suggestion in itself was a bad one, and, indeed, it might be a very good one. But at the same time he must strongly object to taking away from the Education Department control over this one matter when the rest were left to their discretion. ["Hear, hear!"] He knew that there were points on which the opinion of the managers of large schools, having a thousand children, ought to have no more weight than those of small schools having only 20 scholars. He, however, believed that the associations themselves would be able to contrive forms of self-government that would enable them to do their work efficiently and justly without any rule being laid down for them by that House. ["Hear, hear!"] He must therefore deprecate any attempt to lay down a rule of the character suggested by the Amendment. For the reasons he had given he felt himself bound to oppose the Amendment. ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. HUMPHREYS-OWEN said that the point which the hon. Gentleman the mover of the Amendment (Mr. Evans) had made was that the Government had given the House no information whether the representation of the schools upon the associations was to be based on the number of children in the schools or on the population of the district. It was of the greatest importance to prevent the small schools being overborne by the larger schools. Unless provision were made to prevent that unfortunate result being brought about, the associations would be useless for any good purpose. He thought that House ought to lay down the prnciple once for all that the managers of the small schools should have equal weight of representation upon the associations with those of the larger schools. He should support the Amendment.

*Mr. C. HARRISON (Plymouth) said although it was natural that objection should be taken to the Amendment, yet the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, on behalf of the Government, had assured the House the associations were advisory bodies only, and would have no powers, and would not in fact, manage or control the schools. Confined to the purpose of advising the Education Department which particular school was necessitous to justify its having a grant, the exercise of the advisory powers depended upon an accurate knowledge of the state of the school as regards educational efficiency and the sufficiency of the income of the particular school. On such points as these he could see no reason why one school should have an advantage over another when it came to a question of voting, and to protect the interests of the smaller schools the Amendment might be adopted.

Question put, "That those words be there inserted."

The Committee divided—Ayes, 92; Noes, 263.—(Division List, No. 96.)

Mr. SAMUEL EVANS moved, in Subsection (3) to leave out the words "representative of the managers." He said it was incumbent on the Government to show that the governing bodies ought to be representative of the managers. For his part, he would much prefer to leave the matter to the Education Department. What was wanted was, that these governing bodies should take care that this aid grant should be used for increasing the efficiency of the schools; and they knew that some managers were not so careful of education as of some other matters, and if the bodies were to be representative of them, they would not command the confidence of the parents or the children. If the managers were representative of anybody else there would be good reasons for making the governing bodies representative of the managers; but in almost all cases the managers were not representative of anyone. If the matter were left to the Education Department they would see that people were put on these bodies who would look to the efficiency of the schools.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said there had been two Divisions on Amendments which had been moved, and in the discussion of which the hon. Member had taken part. The first was to introduce the word "elective," and the second was to provide that every school in every association should have an equal right of representation. Now the hon. Member, with a happy versatility, had moved an Amendment that there should be no representation and no election at all—[*laughter*]—and that the whole thing should be done by the Education Department at its own sweet will. He had confidence in the Education Department, but he thought that the Committee ought not to omit the guidance given by the words "representative of the managers" of schools. The hon. Member and his friends had occupied all night in restricting the liberty of the Education Department, but now they wanted to turn the moderate liberty given to the Department into absolute licence. [*Laughter.*] The Committee had better pursue the middle course traced in the Bill; and he begged the hon. Member not to press the Amendment to a Division.

MR. REGINALD McKENNA (Monmouth, N.) asked what was to happen to a new school which joined the association? Was it to have representative managers on the association? How were they to be representative? Were they to be elected? What was to be the process in the formation of the associations?

SIR W. HART DYKE (Kent, Dartford) said that the elasticity of the clause commended itself to him.

MR. ELLIS GRIFFITH (Anglesey) maintained that if those words were omitted the Bill would be more elastic than it was now. It was known, according to the authority of the Vice President of the Council, that this association area was to cover a million of inhabitants. If that were so, the managers of a school could not have more than one representative on the association at most. But managers would not go outside their own body for representatives, and the teaching profession of the country would be excluded from the associations, not to say anything of parents and the different public bodies.

SIR W. HART DYKE: There is nothing in the Bill to prevent teachers from being elected.

MR. ELLIS GRIFFITH asked whether the right hon. Gentleman thought that the managers would go outside their own body to get a representative? He commended the Amendment to the right hon. Gentleman as one that made the Bill shorter and not more understood—points in its favour both. [*Laughter.*] It would give a wider scope to the Education Department, and leave the Vice President of the Council a more unfettered discretion to carry out the vague and unknown purposes of the Bill.

MR. ABEL THOMAS said that he had had some experience of the Education Department, and believed that it could be trusted to act in the interest of education. According to the present wording of the sub-section there would be no representation on the association beyond the management concerned; but surely the proper course would be to have some representation beyond this in the administration of such large sums of money? He had sufficient faith in the Vice President of the Council to be sure that if he had the opportunity he would think it right to have on the associations a few persons interested in education from other than the managers' point of view. Many Members on the other side of the House would share that opinion; and to give authority to the Education Department would secure such representation.

MR. A. H. DYKE ACLAND (York, W.R., Rotherham) wished to be quite sure that one or two matters he considered of great importance would still be open after the Committee had voted on the present Amendment. There were two points in controversy here; one was whether teachers should have the opportunity of representation, and the other was whether a certain proportion of representation of laymen should be secured. After a decision on the present Amendment, would it be still open to submit propositions to add members representing different bodies on the associations?

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS said it would be still open to do so, provided such proposals were consistent with decisions already arrived at.

MR. HERBERT LEWIS (Flint Boroughs) said in future it might be expected that there would be considerable development of public secondary education, and it was most important that there should be the most cordial relations between the managers of elementary and secondary education. If this Amendment were accepted it would enable that to be done which in Wales had been done in connection with intermediate education. Elementary teachers had been placed upon the Boards which dealt with intermediate education. It would be possible to have intermediate teachers upon the associations with the managers of elementary schools if the proposal of his hon. Friend were adopted. He hoped the Committee would give the Education Department a sufficiently free hand, so that intermediate and elementary education might be co-ordinated in the manner he had suggested.

Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

The Committee proceeded to a Division:—Ayes, 261; Noes, 83.—(Division List, No. 97.)

And, it being midnight, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

MILITARY WORKS (MONEY) BILL.

Committee deferred till Monday next.

METROPOLITAN AND OTHER POLICE COURTS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday next.

FOREIGN PRISON-MADE GOODS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

PUBLIC HEALTH (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Second Reading [5th February] further adjourned till Thursday next.

BERRIEW SCHOOL BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday next.

MILITARY LANDS ACT (1892) AMENDMENT BILL.

Committee deferred till Monday next.

KINGSTOWN HARBOUR ROADS TRANSFER BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

LAW OF EVIDENCE (CRIMINAL CASES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

TRUSTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Consideration, as amended, deferred till Monday next.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ALDERSHOT AND FARNBOROUGH) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

SCHOOL BOARD ELECTORATE (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday 19th March.

LEASEHOLDERS (PURCHASE OF FEE SIMPLE) (No. 2) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

CORONERS' INQUESTS (RAILWAY FATALITIES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

SUCCESSION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday 24th March.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (1894) AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

LAND LAW (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday 25th March.

INDUSTRIES (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

SURVEYORS (COUNTY DUBLIN) BILL.

Read a Second time, and committed for To-morrow.

PREFERENTIAL PAYMENTS IN BANKRUPTCY ACT (1888) AMENDMENT BILL.

Read the Third time, and passed.

TENANT RIGHT IN TOWNS (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday 19th March.

LICENSING EXEMPTION (HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1881 (IRISH LAND COMMISSION RULES).

Mr. JOHN DILLON (Mayo, E.) moved:—

> "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to direct that Rules 130 and 133 and Forms 28, 29, and 30 of the Irish Land Commission be annulled."

The rules and forms which he desired to have annulled dealt with two separate and important questions. The first rule he would deal with was Rule 130. It had been for a long time the practice of the Land Commission in Ireland to insist by rule—for it was not laid down in any of the Land Acts—that a tenant whose holding was valued at over £10 a year should indorse on the back of the originating notice the particulars of the improvements in respect to which he desired to claim an allowance when the fair rent was fixed. That practice had been in force for a considerable number of years; but when the Land Act of 1896 was passed he and most Irish Members were under the impression that the first Sub-section of that Act would render it impossible for the Land Commission to continue that practice. The opening words of that sub-section were:—

> "Where the Court fixes a fair rent for a holding, the Court shall ascertain, and record in the form of a schedule, unless both landlord and tenant shall otherwise request the following particulars."

And then followed the particulars. That sub-section, in his opinion, cast upon the Sub-Commissioners the duty of ascertaining the required particulars. There was no qualification in that sub-section as to the improvements claimed by the tenant being indorsed on his originating notice. It made it mandatory on the Commission to ascertain and record all improvements on the holding. In order to appreciate the full meaning of the statute it was necessary to remember the process of fixing a fair rent. First, two lay sub-commissioners went to the holding and took a careful record of improvements. Under the rule which he desired to have annulled, these sub-commissioners might, and often did, find improvements which according to the language of the statute ought to be held as the property of the tenant, and in respect of which no rent ought to be allowed. But if the tenant, who might be a poor ignorant man, had not indorsed his notice with the improvements, they were taken from him by a rule of the Court. It was not right for a court of law to frame rules which deprived a suitor of any property which it was the clear intention of the statute to give him. This rule ought not to have been renewed when the Land Commission recast their rules after the Act of last year. Those new rules were now published, though they had not yet been circulated to Members. They had, indeed, only just been laid on the Table in response to a question of his to the Attorney General for Ireland. According to the statute of 1881 they ought to have been laid on the Table within three weeks of the meeting of Parliament, but by some mistake of the Land Commission that had not been done.

*Mr. SPEAKER: I understand from the hon. Gentleman that these rules are not yet printed. I do not know how long they have to lie.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): One hundred days. There is plenty of time.

*Mr. SPEAKER: If there is plenty of time, I would suggest to the hon. Member that it would be very inconvenient to the House to discuss the rules without their being printed. It is very analogous to the case of a Bill which has not been printed before it comes on for Second Reading. It is impossible for an hon. Member who has not seen, and had no opportunity of seeing, these rules to understand them or to see the bearing of each particular rule without reference to the context of the other rules, and therefore I suggest to the hon. Member that it is for the convenience of the House, as well as for himself, that he should postpone the further discussion of this matter until the few days have elapsed in which the Rules may be in the hands of Members.

MR. DILLON said he might explain that the rules had been printed and were in circulation and for sale in Dublin for the last six weeks, and he submitted that it would be extremely hard if they should be deprived of the opportunity of moving this Motion because of the conduct of the Land Commission, who held back the rules which ought to have been laid on the Table and printed three or four weeks ago. He hoped to prove that no inconvenience could arise to hon. Members who took an interest in this matter, and who were acquainted with Irish land legislation. The rules against which he was moving were only two, and were extremely brief. With regard to Rule 130, he desired to see it annulled because in his judgment it was inconsistent with the wording of the first sub-section of the Act of 1896; because in his opinion, and in the opinion of many men skilled in the administration of the Act, it took away from the tenant a property which the Act and that House gave to him, and because he did not think it was consistent with the just administration of the law to frame rules which were calculated to defeat the plain object of the Legislature and the words of an Act of Parliament. There was another reason. A schedule of the improvements claimed was required from the tenant who served an originating notice, but if the landlord served an originating notice he understood he was not compelled to schedule the improvements he claimed. If that were true, could there be a more gross and palpable case of injustice than to put on the poor man, in order to save his property, a duty which they did not require the rich man to do when he came into Court under precisely similar circumstances? Turning to the second part of the Motion, Rule 133 and Forms 28, 29, and 30, which he wished to have annulled, had been drawn up under the direction of Section 1 of the Act of 1896. In that Act it was provided that the schedule should be in the form of the first schedule of the said Act "or any such other form as may be prescribed." Therefore, that gave to the Committee an absolute right as to the form of the schedule. They were not in the least bound to follow the schedule of the Act, and, by an Amendment introduced into Section 1 by the hon. Member for the City of Cork, it was enacted that "nothing contained in the first schedule shall affect the construction of any other portion of the Act." That was inserted, he understood, from the fear that the Committee might think they were in any way bound by the wording of the schedule of the Act. Therefore, the Land Commission in framing the schedules were clearly and distinctly bound not to follow the schedule of the Act of 1896 if it was inconsistent with any other portion of the Act, and he held that the form of the schedule in the Act and, quite as much, the form of the schedules which he asked to be annulled, were plainly inconsistent with the wording of the first section of the Act, and that, therefore, the first section of the Act ought to override the schedules. The first sub-section directed the Commissioners to ascertain and record certain particulars. In ascertaining the fair rent they were not to ascertain the rent of the buildings separate from the land, nor the rent of the land as if it were situated in the planet Saturn, and then add on a number of preposterous imaginary values. They were directed to do as any ordinary valuer would do; they were to value the farm as a going concern and to set upon it a fair value, and ascertain what improvements were the property of the landlord. He held that the schedule which had been adopted by the Government was extremely inconsistent with the wording of the first section of the Statute. The schedule did not give to the tenant the benefits of the procedure or form which was provided for in Section 1 of the Act of 1896. He held, too, that the schedule was an ever-threatening danger. He was told that it had already been applied under the Ulster Custom, but he believed that it would create the greatest alarm in Ulster. He held, furthermore, that the schedule would increase the delay and the block in the Land Courts. With the thousands of cases coming in, in spite of the new appointments, there was an immense block of business which would be greatly increased in the next few years, and this schedule made the work of reviewing the rack rents of 1882, 1883, and 1884, under which the Irish people were groaning five- or six-fold more slow and laborious. He wanted to direct the attention of the House to a remarkable judgment delivered the other day in Dublin by that member of the Commission who was the only one who had any practical experience of land-valuing. Here they had got five men sitting, with jurisdiction to fix fair rents, and three of them were barristers who had no more knowledge of land than he had of the Chinese language. Yet these men's chief business was the fixing of the value of land. Mr. Wrench, although for a long time agent on an estate, had no practical experience in the land valuation. Now, only one man who had any practical knowledge of the value of land was Mr. Commissioner O'Brien. No one had a longer or a more complete experience of the valuation of land than he had. The hon. Member then quoted extracts from the judgment of Mr. Commissioner O'Brien, as reported, he said, in *The Irish Times* of about a fortnight ago. It would be seen, therefore, that in his opinion this schedule added enormously to the labours of the Land Commission, and that it was inconsistent with the terms of the Act of last year, and also worked great injustice to the tenants. These were the grounds upon which he asked the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to assent to this Motion. The tenants ought to be given the benefit of the Act of last year without any conditions or restrictions. ["Hear, hear!"] He begged to move the Motion that stood upon the Paper in his name. ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. J. C. FLYNN (Cork, N.) said that he rose to second the Motion. It was most unfair to require the tenants to give these particulars. In many instances they would be absolutely unable to give them, and in those cases they would be unable to make out their cases before the Assistant Land Commissioners. There were many particulars which the tenants were asked to give which they could not possibly give in many instances. How could the tenants give the capital value of many of their improvements, such as the drainage of their holdings and the reclamation of the soil, in cases where mountain land had been turned into grazing land. It was most hard upon the poor tenants to exact these particulars from them, because, being uninstructed in such matters themselves, they would have to avail themselves of professional assistance at considerable cost. How could a rough unlettered tenant pretend to give the present value of drainage improvements which he had effected three or four summers ago, or of those which had been effected years ago by their forefathers? There was another important point. Where the tenant served the notice he was bound to specify on that notice all the improvements on which he claimed, and even when the landlord served the notice he was bound to do so. That seemed to him altogether unjustifiable. Presumably when the landlord served a notice to fix a fair rent, he did so with the object of getting the rent raised. Surely, therefore, it was not fair to put the *onus probandi* on the tenant. He thought that point would commend itself to the common sense and sense of justice of hon. Members on the other side of the House, and he hoped the Motion would therefore be carried.

*The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. John Atkinson, Londonderry, N.) said that, as he understood it, the objection of the hon. Member to Rule 130 consisted in this, that the Act of last year introduced some different principles, and, therefore, the Rule was not applicable. The hon. Member who last addressed the House did not appear to him to have read the Rule or made himself familiar with its provisions, because he declared that under it an ignorant man would be required to put a capital value on his improvements.

Mr. FLYNN said he meant to say that he would be bound to specify all the improvements on which he meant to rely.

*The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND: Then the hon. Member did not mean what he said. But what was the injustice in requiring a tenant who wished to get his rent reduced, to state as far as he could, within his own knowledge or belief, the particular improvements on which he meant to rely? He could not conceive anything more just or reasonable. The practice had been followed since 1882 and was universal in Courts of Justice. Under the Act of 1896 the Commissioners had to make an inquiry in order to ascertain whether, in fixing a fair rent, a reduction ought to be made in respect of the tenant's improvements. In order to enable them to make that inquiry the tenant was required to tell the Court what the improvements were on which he meant to rely. The hon. Member for East Mayo said that the Act of 1896 had dispensed with the necessity for that inquiry, basing his argument on the first portion of the 1st section of the Act. But that section enacted that the Court should ascertain and be supplied with information as to certain things, in the form of a schedule, among such things being the improvements made wholly or partially by the tenant, or at his cost, the nature and capital value thereof, the dates on which they were made, and the deductions from rent (if any) made on account thereof. How that absolved the tenant from giving all the aid in his power to enable the Court to get all necessary information passed his comprehension. Of course, if a tenant, having full knowledge of improvements that he had made, and of what he claimed, chose to refuse to give particulars, and thereby impeded the Court in arriving at a conclusion, his claim would very properly be disallowed. A litigant could not be excused from stating what his claim was. The obligation on the Court to ascertain the facts did not free the tenant from the obligation of informing the Court of the particulars of his claim. No hardship was inflicted upon a tenant by requiring him to conform to the rules of the Act. He came now to Rule 133.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.) said that the right hon. and learned Gentleman had not explained why a similar obligation was not cast on the landlord.

*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND said that since the passing of the Act now in force for 16 years, he did not think there had been more than a few cases in which the landlord asked to have a rent fixed. ["*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] *Primâ facie* the improvement belonged to the landlord, and the first valuation directed to be made was made on the assumption that the improvements were the landlord's. The first section of the Act provided, among other things, that all these matters were "to be ascertained" and set out in the prescribed schedule. The hon. Member had not pointed to a single item in the schedule ultimately adopted by the Commissioners which was not provided for in the Act. He challenged him to do so. The "pink paper" had been adopted as a schedule to the Act, and the Commissioners were bound under the terms of the Act to preserve as far as possible that schedule. The had simply recast the schedule, shortened and condensed it; but they had required nothing to be specified in the new schedule which was not required in the "pink paper." He would not attempt at such an hour to trespass on the time of the House by going through the schedule point by point, section by section, but he assured the House that he had gone through the schedule most carefully, and could state with the utmost confidence that there was not a single requirement in the new schedule that could not be found in the schedule attached to the Act. What were the two objections taken to the schedule as framed by the Commissioners? They were founded on a judgment of Mr. Murrough O'Brien, and his objections might be divided into two heads. First, Mr. O'Brien said, that proximity should not be taken as a separate subject of valuation. But this was one of the things that the schedule attached to the Act required, and, therefore, he had no hesitation in saying, that had the Land Commissioners in framing the new schedule left out "proximity," as a matter upon which a separate value should be placed, they would have acted in direct contravention of a duty imposed upon them by an Act of Parliament. They had set out "proximity" as a circumstance upon which a value should be placed, and remoteness as a fact to be taken into account in reducing value. What were the other matters on which the hon. Member objected, founding his objections on the judgment of Mr. Murrough O'Brien, in which judgment Mr. O'Brien apparently did not confine himself to the proper duty of a judge—namely, to administer an Act, but went on to condemn its policy. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] The position of a judge did not confer the right to condemn the policy of that Act which Mr. O'Brien had chosen to assume. The second head of the objection was that, according to the requirements of the schedule framed by the Commissioners, valuers were required to value the land as distinct from the buildings upon it.

MR. T. M. HEALY begged to interrupt the right hon. and learned Gentleman on a point of order. Was it in order to state that a Commissioner, whose salary was a charge on the Consolidated Fund, acting judicially, exceeded his duty as a judge in delivering a judgment?

*MR. SPEAKER: I do not quite know what is the position of Mr. O'Brien. I understand he is not a Judge of the High Court. I do not think that in anything he has said the right hon. and learned Gentleman has gone beyond the proper limits of Debate.

*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND resumed his remarks on the objection to the valuation of buildings separately from land. The schedule, no doubt, required this separate valuation, and Mr. O'Brien said this should not be done, but that the buildings should go with the farm and should not be valued separately There were three or four answers to that. In the first place it had been the invariable practice of the Land Commission from 1882 until now; secondly, there had been no inconvenience experienced from it; and, thirdly, this was the principle of one of the best valuations ever made in Ireland. Griffiths' valuation, the Poor Law valuation conducted under Sir Richard Griffiths, was based on the principle of valuing land and buildings separately. The fourth answer was that Mr. Morrough O'Brien, in a case which attracted the most attention to the exercise of his powers as a land valuer, and for which he was greatly praised, namely Adams *v.* Dunseath, he himself had valued the land separately from the buildings. He failed to see, therefore, how a gentleman who in the most conspicuous case in which, perhaps, he was ever employed, valued land separately from buildings, could say that the Commissioners were open to his condemnation because they adopted the same course. [" Hear, hear!"] The schedule attached to the Act in its first part required that land should be valued separately from buildings, and the Commissioners were bound to carry that out. It provided for different qualities of land being valued according to their class and quality, entirely irrespective of the fact whether buildings were upon them or not. The Commissioners had no power to put aside the duties and obligations cast upon them by the statute. The hon. Member for East Mayo seemed to be under the impression that injustice might be done to the tenants by this mode of procedure. There was no well grounded apprehension whatever for anything of the kind. No valuer who knew his business would first value the whole farm with the buildings upon it as a going concern, and then in addition to that, value the buildings and add their value to the value so found, so as to make the tenant pay twice. Mr. O'Brien himself did not do it, and no valuer knowing his business and acting with a proper sense of his duty would attempt to adopt such a principle. [" Hear, hear!"]

MR. T. M. HEALY remarked that it was extremely kind of the hon. and learned Gentleman to make the defence he had done for the Land Commission, and it was in accordance with his well-known spirit of generosity, because if ever a man had been flouted by that body it was the hon. and learned Gentleman in the advice he gave to the House while the Land Act was passing through. His opinion as a high Law Officer was flouted by the Land Commission in a gross and irregular manner, and his opinion, though reversed and held to be bad, was upheld by the Court of Appeal. [" Hear, hear!"] The Attorney General must have felt the action of the Land Commission very keenly, and in coming forward to defend a body with regard to which he was sure he yielded to no man in his contempt, did a very generous act. [*Laughter.*] The duty was not fairly cast on the Attorney General to defend the Land Commission. He could imagine nothing more unfair than to cast on the Government of the day, which might be wholly opposed to the administration of Land Acts, or the policy which called them forth, the duty of defending rules which they might have never seen or been consulted about. However, the Attorney General, in the exercise of his generosity, had come forward as the defender of the Land Commission. It was said that the Land Commision were anxious to follow out in letter and in spirit the directions of Parliament. A body which neglected the first direction of Parliament deserved impeachment, because the House of Commons, being a High Inquisition, was entitled to know what this body was doing. There was in the forefront a statutory provision that any rules that the Commission made should be laid before Parliament within three weeks after they were made if Parliament was sitting. Yet the Commission flouted, defied, and derided the law of Parliament, and it was said the interests of humble cotter tenants in Ireland were safe in its hands. This pinched the landlords as well as the tenants, and he waited to see what the Attorney General would say in that regard.

*The ATTORNEY GENERAL said he had already, in answer to a question, stated that it was by a pure accident that these rules were not laid on the Table at the proper time, and was entirely due to the unfortunate illness of the officer responsible.

Mr. T. M. HEALY remarked that it was said to have been by "a pure accident" that a policeman was shot in Manchester in 1867, but all the same three men were hanged for that pure accident. But here was the Land Commission, the officials of which received from £3,500 a year downwards—which had the most expensive staff in the world—formerly it was said it cost a sovereign to lend a tenant a sovereign, he supposed that was not the case now—and spent £150,000 or £200,000 in one way or another, which was supposed to "search the Scriptures" to see how they could benefit the Irish tenant, flying in the face of the House and neglecting to comply with the rules of Parliament, as to laying its rules on the Table at the proper time.

*Mr. SPEAKER said the question before the House was not whether the rules were laid on the Table at the proper time, but whether the specific rules in question should be annulled.

Mr. T. M. HEALY said his point was that the Government should under the circumstances give special time for the consideration of the rules, but he would obey the direction of the Speaker. According to the statement of the Attorney General, it was owing to the action of some disembodied spirit, whose name did not even figure on the lips of the right hon. Gentleman, that this extraordinary defiance of Parliament had taken place, and they accepted that statement, in the words of Mr. Rhodes, with "unctuous rectitude." It was true, as the right hon. Gentleman had said, that the rule he mentioned had been since 1882 a rule of the Land Commission. That was exactly the point of the case. In 1882 the rule was made at the instance of the House of Lords. The right hon. Gentleman explained that there were no rules of this kind made in favour of or against landlords. The reason of the omission was that the rule was made in a hostile sense against the tenants by a hostile body—the landlords in the House of Lords—["hear, hear!"]—who let the landlords off scot free. He said that the landlords never brought any cases. He (Mr. Healy) recollected that Lord Devon brought no less than 50 cases of applications to raise rents. Lord Longford, the Marquess of Headford, and others brought similar cases. He said frankly that he did not think it was any great hardship on the tenant that the landlord should not give notice of making improvements because they never made any. ["Hear, hear!"] He listened to the argument of the Attorney General, but he thought the right hon. Gentleman missed the point, which was that the rule was constitutional and statutable. Up to the passing of the Act of 1896 it was the same old rule that remained in existence. He thought the right hon. Gentleman would have been well advised if he had said the Debate could not go on, as he had not had sufficient notice, and that he would get the defence of the Land Commission and let the House decide later whether their reasons were right or wrong. That would have been a reasonable view for the right hon. Gentleman to have put forward, but that was not the view that he did present to the House. Accordingly, they had to consider this: Did the Act of 1896 make a difference? Would anyone say that if the House of Lords had carried an Amendment enjoining that the improvements should be recorded by the tenant, that that Amendment would not have had an effect? He had never made a complaint that the tenant should be compelled to give notice of his improvements in certain cases. It tended to make the tenant accurate in making up his case, and, above all, it tended to make the solicitor of the tenant accurate in presenting his case. He was glad to see the other day an action brought by a tenant against his solicitor because the solicitor neglected to make a schedule of the improvements, whereby the improvements were disallowed. Why did not that attorney, when he knew that the action was threatened, say to the Court, "It was my mistake," and apply to the Court for liberty notwithstanding to make proof of the improvements? He did not do so because he knew that the Land Commission, if the tenant had by any inadvertence failed to give notice of his improvements, would not allow fresh proof of the improvements to be given even though those improvements might be as obvious as the Clock Tower to anyone passing over Westminster Bridge. In his opinion, the Act of 1896 had made a difference. The Land Commissioners were told by that Act that they must ascertain and make a record of the improvements. He did not deny that the Land Commission was entitled to the assistance of the parties in the case, but he said that where there was no real intention of flouting the rule the duty was cast on the Land Commission to ascertain the improvements for themselves. Why did the Land Commissioners go on the land? To use their eyes. If they saw bog on one side of a ditch, and reclaimed land on the other, the obvious conclusion was that there had been reclamation, and if the tenant failed to put down ten acres of bog reclaimed, was he to lose the benefit of those improvements? This schedule was put in by the House of Lords with the view of quieting the landlords in possession, and of providing that in 1897 the improvement should be earmarked for all time, so that it would no longer be possible to plead loose practice on behalf of the tenant. The 15 years' term from 1897 would be 1912. The Act enabled the tenant to go back to 1881; and in order that the tenant could not say in 1912 that he failed to claim in 1881 because he did not come in till 1882, and that he failed to claim in 1897 because he forgot to endorse his notice, the House of Lords said, "We will cast on the Land Commission the duty of ascertaining and recording all improvements." The Land Commission was a Court of inferior jurisdiction, and he was not at all sure that if the Commission were served with a mandamus and the case was heard by a fair Court of Queen's Bench, which did not always happen, they could not be compelled to do the duty. Therefore the Government had better not divide against the Motion. The landlords were asleep, naturally. If this were a question of Canon Gregg or of the Battle of the Boyne, they would be wide awake. The Government should ask the Commission what value they attached to these words in the Act of 1896. It was not a body for whose accuracy anyone need have any respect. The test of any tribunal was the legal opinion of it, and did anyone in Ireland respect the Irish Land Commission? There was no duty on the Government to defend these rules. The Commission had committed blunder after blunder, they were held in no degree of confidence or esteem either by the landlords or the tenants. He thought this was a case for inquiry. The question of improvements went to the root of the whole question. It was one of enormous importance, and they should not be expected at that hour of the morning to come to a conclusion on the matter. For the purpose of enabling the Government to address to the Land Commission an inquiry on the point, he begged to move "That the Debate be now adjourned."

MR. JAMES DALY (Monaghan, S.) seconded the Motion.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds, Central) said the Government could not accept the Motion. The Speaker had suggested that the hon. Member for East Mayo should postpone the discussion until these rules had been printed, but as the hon. Member declined to accept that suggestion, and as the discussion had gone on for nearly two hours, he thought they must ask the House to come to a decision. The hon. Member for Louth had not raised any points which were not raised by the hon. Member for East Mayo. Those points were carefully examined and gone through by his right hon. Friend, and he thought the House would come to the conclusion that his answers were perfectly satisfactory. ["Hear, hear!"]

Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned," put, and negatived.

COLONEL WARING (Down, N.) said that though they would vote with the Government against the Motion of the hon. Member for East Mayo, they must not be understood as being satisfied with the schedule as it stood. They were of opinion that many of the particulars which the Act intended should be recorded in it were not so recorded, and they must not be understood as acquiescing in the schedule as giving all the information which they thought both landlord and tenant were entitled to.

Original Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 40; Noes, 101.—(Division List, No. 98.)

And, it being after One of the clock, Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put.

House adjourned at a Quarter before Two o'Clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, 12th March 1897.

WORKING MEN'S DWELLINGS BILL. [H.L.]

On the Motion to go into Committee on this Bill,

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY said he would have moved the Motion without any comment had it not been that there was, on the part of some of their Lordships and some of the public outside, an impression that there was some compulsion about this Measure. He was at a loss to understand why such an impression should have got abroad. Both last year, when a similar Bill was before their Lordships, and last Tuesday, he distinctly stated that the Measure was purely permissive. He recognised that there should be every safeguard in the interests of the ratepayers, and on that point he desired to point out to the noble Earl the Leader of the Opposition that so far as those interests could be safeguarded they had been safeguarded in the Bill. Had it been proper for him to make a third speech on Tuesday last, he would have liked to say how heartily he endorsed the remarks of the Earl of Kimberley as to the danger there might appear at first sight to be in enabling local authorities to grant the ratepayers' money for the purpose of enabling working men to obtain possession of their houses on terms perfectly fair and just to buyer and seller. The noble Earl pointed to a weakness in connection with the Bill, and that was that the population in industrial centres was fluctuating. He admitted that on that account it would be the duty of local authorities, to whom under the Bill was intrusted the power to advance money if they thought fit, to assure themselves that the prosperity of the industry on which the working classes depended for their livelihood was assured before they advanced the money. He did not know that there could be a better safeguard than the Bill provided, but he would be glad to receive any suggestion on the point.

Bill considered in Committee (according to Order); reported without amendment; and re-committed to the Standing Committee.

RETIREMENT OF VESTRYMEN AND AUDITORS (LONDON) BILL [H.L.].

Read 3ª (according to Order), passed, and sent to the Commons.

PREFERENTIAL PAYMENTS IN BANKRUPTCY ACT (1888) AMENDMENT BILL.

Brought from the Commons; Read 1ª; and to be printed.—[No. 28.]

ISLE OF MAN (CHURCH BUILDING ACTS) BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to remove doubts as to the applicability of the Church Building Acts and New Parishes Acts to the Isle of Man, was presented by the Prime Minister; Read 1ª; and to be printed.—[No. 30.]

House adjourned at Twenty minutes before Five o'Clock, to Monday next, a Quarter before Eleven o'Clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 12th March 1897.

QUESTIONS.

WORKMISTRESSES (IRISH NATIONAL SCHOOLS).

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state whether it comes within the scope of the Inquiry on Manual and Practical Instruction in Irish National Schools now sitting in Dublin, to investigate and make a recommendation on the system and scale of payment to Irish workmistresses; and if so, will facilities be offered to workmistresses in the rural districts of Ireland to appear before the Commission and give evidence?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds, Central): I am unable to say whether the Commission on Manual and Practical Instruction will consider the question referred to as coming within the scope of the reference to them. I understand that evidence has already been taken with reference to the teaching of needlework in National Schools by workmistresses, and any person desiring to give evidence before the Commission should communicate with the Secretary. The Commission propose to visit Belfast, Cork, and Galway, and possibly a few other places in Ireland.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland can he state whether any recommendations have been made during the past six months to the Commissioners of National Education as to the justice and advisability of reasonably increasing the annual salary and results fees of workmistresses in Irish National Schools; and, if so, can he hold out any hope that this grievance on the part of these teachers will be considered and redressed?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: Recommendations have, I understand, been made from various quarters to the Commissioners on the subject of an increase in the fees payable to workmistresses for instruction in needlework, but no proposals appear to have been made to them dealing specially with the salaries of workmistresses. As regards the inquiry at the end of the Question, I am afraid I cannot at present add anything to my reply to the the similar Question of the hon. Member for North Monaghan of the 8th February.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL: Can the right hon. Gentleman say what was the reply of the Commissioners of National Education to the proposal?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I am unable to say.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to give notice that I shall ask a question on the subject on Tuesday.

COOPERS (NAVY).

SIR JAMES HASLETT (Belfast, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he is aware that the wages paid to coopers on board Her Majestys' Navy is below the current rate paid elsewhere; and will he take steps to remedy this inequality?

MR. H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the Admiralty has considered the case of the Royal Naval Coopers; whether they are willing to grant to the coopers in the Royal Navy the same position, remuneration, and privileges as are granted to other skilled shipwrights; and whether it is proposed to call upon Naval Maltese coopers to take their turn in foreign service?

*THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. W. E. MACARTNEY, Antrim, S.): The conditions of service and the nature of the duties of coopers on board Her Majesty's ships differ from those of men in private employment; and no proper comparison can therefore be drawn between the pay given in the Navy and the wages paid in the open market. It is not proposed to reconsider the scale of pay which was settled so recently as 1891, or to place coopers in the same position as shipwrights. Maltese coopers are specially entered for service on the Mediterranean station only, and there is no intention of calling upon them to serve elsewhere. It is customary to employ native coopers on all foreign stations when they can be obtained.

WOOL SORTING REGULATIONS.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has received communications from the Bradford Chamber of Commerce, and from the Yorkshire Textile Workers' Federation, asking for the proposed new regulations governing wool sorting; and whether he can name a date at which the regulations will be ready?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY, Lancashire, Blackpool): The special rules are being served upon the occupiers of factories and workshops to which they apply, and copies have also been sent to the bodies named, and others who have made application?

INLAND TELEGRAPHS.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether, with the view of simplifying the departmental accounts and facilitating the introduction of reforms in the telegraphic service, he will recommend that the balance still outstanding of the debt originally incurred for the acquisition of the Inland Telegraphs shall be no longer charged exclusively against telegraph revenue, but capitalised, and paid off by means of a sinking fund?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. R. W. HANBURY, Preston): If the hon. Member will refer to Parliamentary Paper No. 49 of this Session he will see that the debt originally incurred for the acquisition of the telegraphs consists of capital stock (Consols) created under Acts of Parliament, and forms part of the Funded Debt of the country. In the same paper the hon. Member will see that, in addition to the capital stock raised, there is a further sum for accumulated annual deficiencies of no less than £6,186,546. In these circumstances the hon. Member will also see that, as there is no surplus of telegraph revenue, the charge of the debt created for the purchase of the telegraphs cannot be paid out of that revenue.

WATERFORD AND LIMERICK RAILWAY.

MR. M. J. FLAVIN (Kerry, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he is aware that a bridge has been built over the River Feale between Duagh and Islandanny, in the county Kerry, at a cost of £3,496 10s. raised by money out of the rates levied in the county by the Grand Jury; whether he is aware that three-fourths of the money borrowed has been repaid to the Commissioners of Public Works (Ireland); and whether, seeing that an old right of way passage has been in existence in this place for the past 50 years, he will take such steps as may be necessary to compel the Waterford and Limerick Railway Company to construct a level crossing so as to allow the public to exercise their right to travel over the bridge from one public road to another?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. C. T. RITCHIE, Croydon): I have no power to compel the Company to construct a level crossing, but I will communicate with them and see if anything can be done.

MR. FLAVIN: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that this bridge has been constructed seven years by the ratepayers, who have no legal right to use it owing to the action of the Railway Company?

MR. RITCHIE: I do not know how long the bridge has been constructed, but I do know that I am constantly being asked to get level crossings upon it.

MR. FLAVIN: I shall put a further question on the subject.

SALISBURY PLAIN.

MR. A. H. E. ALLHUSEN (Salisbury): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that there are several schemes suggested for connecting Salisbury with the proposed manœuvring ground on Salisbury Plain by means of a railway; and, whether he will be prepared to consider any suggestions or plans that may be submitted by the Corporation of Salisbury?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. J. POWELL-WILLIAMS, Birmingham, S.): The Secretary of State is aware that several schemes have already been suggested for improved railway accommodation between Salisbury and the manœuvring ground which it is proposed to acquire in the neighbourhood, and he would be glad to see any measures set on foot which would be to the advantage of the public and the War Office, but so far as he is aware there is at present no occasion for any intervention on his part.

SIERRA LEONE.
(HEALTH OF CIVIL OFFICIALS.)

MR. R. J. PRICE (Norfolk, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has any confirmation of the report that, during the first seven months of 1896, out of about 20 English officials in the Colony of Sierra Leone there were three deaths and five cases in which the officials had to be invalided home; whether officials have to serve 15 months at Sierra Leone before obtaining leave, whereas in the Gold Coast Colony they have only to serve 12 months; and whether, seeing that Europeans are particularly subject to illness during the later months of their stay on the Coast, the Colonial Office can see its way to making the rules as to leave in Sierra Leone the same as in the Gold Coast Colony?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): I regret to state that during the months in question, which were exceptionally unhealthy, no less than five deaths occurred among the English civil officials, of whom there are about 30, and three were invalided home, besides two (including the Governor) who were invalided to the Canary Islands. The periods for which officials have to serve in Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast before obtaining ordinary leave are as stated, but in case of illness sick leave is granted sooner. It does not appear that Europeans are more subject to illness during the later months of their stay than during the earlier ones, and, while I am anxious that everything possible should be done to improve the conditions of life on the coast, I do not think that a sufficient case has yet been made out for reducing the term of service in Sierra Leone to 12 months, and throwing a considerable burden on the finances of the colony. Sierra Leone, as far as statistics go, is more healthy than the Gold Coast.

IRISH MAIL SERVICE.

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether any and, if any, what arrangements have as yet been made with the Irish railway companies in relation to the proposed new time table for the Irish mail service?

MR. HANBURY: No arrangements have yet been completed, but the work is being proceeded with, and no avoidable delay will take place.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether, in view of the inconvenience accruing to the inhabitants of Bundoran, Ballyshannon, and the surrounding districts from the inadequate mail service, any steps have been taken to improve the said service; and whether the postal authorities have recently approached the Great Northern Railway Company on the subject?

MR. HANBURY: Inquiries are now being made on the question of improving the mail service to and from Bundoran, Ballyshannon, etc., and although no communication on the subject has yet been addressed to the Great Northern Railway Company, they will shortly be asked whether they are now able to run trains at suitable hours for the mail service. The Postmaster General regrets that he would not be justified in providing at the public cost a special train for this service.

MR. MAURICE HEALY (Cork): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether the hour, 6.29 a.m. (Irish), given in the recent Return, with reference to the Irish mail service, as the time when the night mail from London arrives at Dublin, represents the hour of arrival at Westland Row Station; what the hour of arrival of the Cork portion of the same mail at Kingsbridge Station is; and what the time allowed between the two stations for the mail referred to under the new service will be?

MR. HANBURY: The hour, 6.29 a m. (Irish), given in the recent Return as the time when the night mail from London arrives in Dublin represents the hour of arrival at Westland Row Station. The hour of arrival of the Cork portion of the same mail at Kingsbridge Station is 7.0 a.m. The time allowed between the two Stations for the mail referred to under the new service will be 31 minutes, as now.

MR. S. YOUNG (Cavan, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he has received a resolution from the county Cavan Grand Jury, unanimously passed at the late Spring Assizes, urging the necessity of establishing a fast train service from Dundalk on the arrival there of the mail at 7.20 a.m. to Cavan, Enniskillen, Bundoran, and Belturbet, with a connecting train on the Cavan and Leitrim Railway, in order to secure an earlier postal delivery; and whether he will take steps in a matter of so much importance to accede to the prayer of the resolution?

MR. HANBURY: The Postmaster General has received a copy of the resolution referred to. The question of extending the benefit of the acceleration of the mails to Enniskillen and the surrounding district is receiving attention, and in the negotiation for the revision of the time tables of the main line trains, the Great Northern Railway Company will be made acquainted with the strong desire for improvement which exists, in the hope that they may be able to meet the wishes expressed by the hon. Member. The Post Office, however, would not be justified in putting on a special train, even to Enniskillen for the purpose, at the public cost, and the same remark applies with even greater force to the suggested connecting trains to Bundoran, and on the Cavan and Leitrim Railway.

FEMALE TELEGRAPH LEARNERS, DUBLIN.

MR. J. L. CAREW (Dublin, College Green): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he is aware that female telegraph learners, aged between 15 and 18 years, are employed in the Dublin General Post Office in the transcription of press messages giving the details of divorce cases, and that on Monday 8th March, these learners were similarly employed in connection with a public trial for gross immorality; and, whether the Postmaster General will order that in future such duties shall devolve on the male learners?

MR. HANBURY: The Postmaster General is not aware of the particular circumstances referred to by the hon. Member, and he will make inquiry on the subject. But it would be extremely difficult and not conducive to efficiency to lay down any hard-and-fast line of division of the duties between the male and female staff.

MALMESBURY PETTY SESSIONS.

MR. H. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to a case that occurred on 2nd March at the Malmesbury petty sessions, in which a a witness declined to be sworn unless his expenses were paid, on which the Court committed him to prison for seven days for treating the Court with gross disrespect; will he explain what authority the magistrates possessed to commit this witness; and whether he proposes to take any action in the matter?

*SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: I have seen a newspaper report of this case. The authority under which the magistrates acted is given by Section 7 of the Summary Jurisdiction Act, 1848, which says, that if a person summoned to give evidence, on appearing before the justices, refuses to be examined upon oath or refuses to take the oath, he may be committed to prison for a term not exceeding seven days. The magistrates appear to have given the prisoner every opportunity before the Court rose of apologising for his refusal, and I cannot see any reason for taking action in the matter.

CLOGHER VALLEY TRAMWAY.

MR. D. MACALEESE (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been drawn to the alleged imperfect way in which the repairs of the Clogher Valley Tramway are carried out. Is he aware that the tramway surface men, or permanent way men, are drafted from their duties on the line, and detailed to fill gravel at a river near Ballygawley, the said gravel being sold to the Great Northern Railway Company at 10s. per wagon; and that the permanent way men are also occasionally sent to Aughnacloy and Tynan to load and disload coals, while 27 miles of the tramway must remain unmanned in their absence; and will he, in the interest of public safety, have these allegations carefully inquired into?

MR. RITCHIE: I have communicated with the Company on the subject of the hon. Member's Question, and the reply is:—

> "Line inspected by James Barton, Civil Engineer, Dundalk, 27th February. He reports, permanent way continues satisfactory and line fair order throughout. We raise ballast Ballygawley river, and some is disposed of Great Northern Railway. We also unload coals for Company's use by permanent way staff drafted from gangs from which they can be spared by our inspectors."

No representation has reached me alleging that this line is not properly maintained. If a representation is made by the bodies or persons referred to in the statute, I will take care that it is considered.

EXPERIMENTS ON LIVING ANIMALS.

MR. MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in view of the fact that in the Return showing the number of experiments performed in the year 1895 on the bodies of living animals in these countries, amounting in all to 4,679, of which 3,119 were performed under special certificates dispensing with anæsthetics, the term "experiment" means the whole series of experiments carried out on a particular line of research, and that 200 or 300 animals are at times used in a single experiment, while 80 or 90 is a common number, whether there is any record kept of the number of animals used in the 4,679 experiments of 1895; and whether he will, under the powers conferred upon him by 39 and 40 Vic., c. 77, s. 9, direct that the vivisectors, in making reports for the Vivisectors' Return for 1896, will state the number of animals used in each experiment?

*SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: The hon. Member is under an entire misapprehension. The number of animals used does not exceed the number of experiments given in the return. In fact it is less.

MR. MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Inspectors appointed under 39 and 40 Vic., c. 77, for the purpose of securing a compliance with the provisions of that Act to visit places registered for vivisection, do in fact visit such places during the performance of experiments on the bodies of living animals; whether they inspect the bodies of the vivisected animals after the performance of these experiments, or are usually present at vivisection, and do they usually see the bodies of the vivisected animals; have the Inspectors any power to mitigate or prevent the infliction of pain on animals by vivisectors who experiment under Special Certificate A, which permits its holder to experiment without anæsthetics; and will he state in what degree or to what extent inspection operates as a prevention of unnecessary pain being inflicted on living animals?

*SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: The Inspectors both visit registered premises during the performance of these experiments and see the bodies of animals upon which experiments have been performed. Certificate A is never allowed except for inoculations and similar trivial operations, and in every case a condition is attached to prevent unnecessary pain. The safeguards against the infliction of unnecessary pain are the character of the persons to whom licences are given, the careful inquiry that is made by the Home Office beforehand, and, lastly, the stringent conditions under which licences are given and certificates allowed, and which it is the duty of the Inspectors to see properly observed.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

MR. PATRICK M'HUGH (Leitrim, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that a Select Committee on Parliamentary Debates in 1893 recommended that the daily Reports of Parliamentary Proceedings should be delivered at the Vote Office to all Members desiring copies; did the Treasury consider that recommendation, and with what result; and, in case the Treasury cannot agree to supply Members gratis with the daily parts, will he consider the advisability of reducing the present exorbitant price of same?

MR. HANBURY: The Committee did not say whether the Reports should be delivered gratis or not. A gratis delivery would be such an extravagant proceeding that it seems unlikely that they should have contemplated it. The Committee's recommendations, as a whole, were considered by the late Government, who decided that their cost would be too great to justify acceptance. The difficulty of reducing the price of the daily parts is that it might reduce the price chargeable under contract for the complete sets, thereby increasing the cost of the contract; but I will keep the hon. Member's point in mind when the terms of the new contract are under consideration.

LOCAL LOANS STOCK BILL.

MR. PATRICK M'HUGH: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he can now state whether a Bill dealing with Local Loans Stock will be introduced this Session by Her Majesty's Government?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir MICHAEL HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): I am not able to make any statement on the subject, and I am not very hopeful of being able to introduce a Bill. It would be useless to do so unless there was a reasonable chance of proceeding with it.

GARVAGH ESTATE, CO. CAVAN.

MR. YOUNG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether his attention has been drawn to the conduct of the agents of the Garvagh estates, in county Cavan, in pressing the tenants, who are wretchedly poor, for payment of arrears and hanging gale; (2) whether he is aware of the number of writs and processes issued against the tenants for the past two years; (3) whether he is aware that in cases where decrees were granted for rent due to Lord Garvagh the agents added arrears to the decrees; and that the agents have threatened tenants that in cases where rents were fixed for a second statutory term they must be paid half yearly, and within fourteen days after becoming due, or legal proceedings would be taken without further notice; (4) and whether the Government will, under these circumstances, refuse them the protection of the police in carrying out decrees for sums which the tenants, under such pressure, are unable to pay?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I am informed that the agents are now endeavouring to collect the arrears on this estate, and that they have in some cases refused to accept payment of a year's rent without the hanging gale. About 10 writs and processess were issued against tenants on the estate during the past two years. It does not appear that arrears were added to decrees granted at the suit of Lord Garvagh. Only two of the tenants have had rents fixed for a second statutory term, and both of these tenants have been served with notices to pay their rents half-yearly. As regards the last paragraph, the sheriff is entitled to demand and to receive protection of the forces of the Crown in executing the decrees of Courts of Justice, and Government has no option in the matter.

MR. J. C. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Is the sheriff entitled to demand the presence of a large force of police?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The sheriff is entitled to demand the presence of any force that may be necessary.

CAMERON HIGHLANDERS.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether he will favourably consider the proposal to furnish the Cameron Highlanders with a second battalion by transferring to them the second battalion of the Connaught Rangers, formerly the 94th Regiment, and the representative of the old Scots Brigade?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): To separate the battalion which was formerly the 94th Regiment from the Connaught Rangers and to combine it with another corps would, I fear, not be acceptable with the battalion affected; and, inasmuch as the 94th Regiment, which had been the old Scots Brigade, was disbanded in 1818, Lord Lansdowne feels that this is not a case in which the change would be advisable.

MAGISTRACY (IRELAND), MR. WARDEN.

MR. D. KILBRIDE (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that at a recent Petty Sessions held in Kenmare, when three men were fined £5 each for poaching salmon, and two others £5 each for game trespass, Mr. Warden, of Sneem, was one of the presiding Justices; how often has Mr. Warden attended the Kenmare Petty Sessions; when he so attended previous to this occasion; whether his usual Petty Sessions district is Sneem, 16 miles from Kenmare; whether it is in accordance with the recognised rule that Magistrates should go outside their usual district to adjudicate in special cases; whether there are a sufficient number of Justices of the Peace in the Kenmare district; and whether

Mr. Warden's conduct will be brought under the notice of the Lord Chancellor?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: Kenmare and Sneem are adjoining Petty Sessional districts, and at the time of Mr. Warden's appointment to the Commission of the Peace he was authorised to attend Petty Sessions in both districts. He was clearly within his right, therefore, if he adjudicated at Kenmare Sessions on the date mentioned. I have no information as to the number of his attendances at these Sessions, though I understand he has lately confined his attendance mainly to Sneem. I have no reason to believe that the number of Justices in Kenmare district is insufficient. The reply to the concluding paragraph is in the negative.

MR. KILBRIDE: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he is aware that Mr. Warden has not attended the Petty Sessions in Kenmare for the last three years?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: No, Sir; that may be the fact, but I was not aware of it.

FERMANAGH SCHOOL ESTATE.

MR. P. C. DOOGAN (Tyrone, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that the Commissioners of Education, having granted an abatement to their tenants on the Fermanagh School Estate on last year's rent owing to the general depression, instructed their agent to exclude therefrom all judicial tenants, tenants who had served originating notices, and tenants in arrears of rents, thus precluding the great bulk of the farmers and all the poorer ones from receiving any benefit whatever from the abatement; and whether the Commissioners will reconsider their decision, and instruct their agent to extend the reduction without such discrimination to all the tenants on their estate?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I am informed by the Commissioners that they decided, after full consideration, to allow an abatement to non-judicial tenants on the rents falling due in November, 1896, and to tenants who served originating notices since November, 1896; but tenants who served notices affecting the rents of 1896 received no abatement, nor has it been given to tenants paying arrears of rent prior to November last. I cannot say whether the Commissioners will reconsider their decision, but I understand that they have not been asked to do so.

WANSTEAD FLATS.

MR. LOUIS SINCLAIR (Essex, Romford): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that barbed wire has been used instead of proper fencing round the Wanstead Flats; and that a few months ago an inquest was held at East Ham on the body of a poor man who lost his life through having his hand pricked with the wire, poisoning supervening; and, as the Wanstead Flats is a playground for children during the summer, and thousands of people congregate on them in the holidays, whether he would have the barbed wire replaced by fencing which would not be so dangerous?

THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. T. W. RUSSELL, Tyrone, S.): The Local Government Board have no authority whatever to give any directions as to the use of barbed wire in connection with fencing round the Wanstead Flats.

GAMBLING IN "OPTIONS" AND "FUTURES."

MR. W. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the Department have asked for information to be obtained of the results of special Parliamentary inquiries already made or being held in America, Germany, Belgium, Austria, and Hungary respecting actual or proposed legislation in fictitious produce or in metals?

MR. RITCHIE: I am hardly prepared to make such an extensive inquiry as that suggested by the hon. Member, especially having regard to the fact that the matter is one in regard to which this country is quite competent to form its own opinion.

INDIAN FAMINE.

MR. M. M. BHOWNAGGREE (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the thanks of Her Majesty's Government were recently tendered to the Government of the Czar for the help and relief extended by Russia to the people of India in the distress caused by the prevailing famine; and, if so, will he state the amount of money, grain, or of any other form of help in which the Russian Government and people are stated to have offered succour to the sufferers?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. G. CURZON, Lancashire, Southport): The thanks of Her Majesty's Government have been communicated to the Russian Government for the assistance offered by them in relief of the Indian famine. But we have not as yet received any information as to the amounts of money or grain which they may have dispatched to India.

DOCKYARD OFFICERS' PAY.

MR. W. T. HOWELL (Denbigh Boroughs): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty (1) whether in view of the recent increase in pay granted to the principal officers of the Constructive and Engineering Departments of the Dockyards, it is intended to make similar increase to the principal officers of the Staff Captains' Department; and (2) whether it has been noted that the present pay of an Assistant Staff Captain is less than the Naval full pay of that officer.

MR. MACARTNEY: The answer to the first Question of the hon. Member is in the negative. As regards the second Question it is the fact that the salary of Assistant Staff Captain in the Harbour Master's Department of the Dockyard is less by a few pounds than the full pay of an officer of similar rank if employed afloat; but this does not cover the whole ground of the comparison, as the former enjoys the advantage of an official residence on shore.

ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether, under the proposed scheme for the reorganisation of the Royal Naval Reserve, it will be open to men of the Royal Marines of 12 years' service, discharged with good character, to enter the reserve of qualified seamen, or whether the class will be confined to A.B's.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. G. J. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): The class of "qualified seamen" of the Royal Naval Reserve will be confined to A.B's., but a scheme for establishing a Reserve of Marines is under consideration.

AGRICULTURAL RATING BILL.

MR. JOHN McLEOD (Sutherland): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate when it is proposed to bring in a Bill providing for the application of the sum of £15,000 per annum allocated to the Highlands under the Agricultural Rating Act of last Session?

The following Question was also on the Paper in the name of Mr. T. C. H. HEDDERWICK (Wick Burghs): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether it is the intention of the Government to create a Congested Districts Board for the Highlands?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire): These Questions were only put down last night. There was already a Question with reference to the same matter on the Paper for Monday. I shall reply to the hon. Members for Sutherland and the Wick Burghs on that day, when I answer the hon. Member for Argyllshire.

INCOME TAX AND LAND TAX.

MR. J. S. GILLIAT (Lancashire, Widnes): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, with regard to parishes transferred from one county to another under the Local Government Act of 1888, it is the fact that the Board of Inland Revenue have no power to transfer these parishes for Income Tax and Land Tax purposes into the tax divisions of the county in which they have been thus included; and whether, if this be the case, the Chancellor of the Exchequer will consider if he can introduce a Bill to remove the anomaly under which owners of property in such parishes suffer by having to pay Income Tax in the divisions of counties to which they no longer belong?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: The Board of Inland Revenue have power to assign a parish or place, which is detached from the main body of the county to which it belongs, to a division of the county which adjoins or is near to it, for the purposes of Land Tax and Income Tax. But the fact that a parish is transferred under the Local Government Act of 1888 from one administrative county to another does not of itself give the Board power to make a corresponding transfer for Land Tax and Income Tax purposes. It might for some purposes be desirable that the boundaries of tax divisions should coincide with county boundaries, but I am not aware of any case in which the individual taxpayer suffers by this want of uniformity.

NAVY (SHIPS IN CONSTRUCTION).

MR. J. J. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty as to the ships now being constructed or reconstructed for the Navy, whether he will state how many are being constructed and reconstructed in England, Scotland, and Ireland respectively?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: The total number of ships and vessels of all kinds now being constructed in Her Majesty's dockyards and in private yards in the United Kingdom are:—England, dockyards, 27, private yards, 59—total, 86; Scotland, private yards, 21; Ireland, none, but one ship, the *Black Prince*, is now being converted into a training ship at a private yard at Queenstown. The hon. Member must be aware that the work assigned to private shipbuilding yards is determined entirely by the result of tenders, submitted by firms of known capacity in all parts of the United Kingdom.

MR. W. REES DAVIES (Pembrokeshire): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether Pembroke Dockyard is included in the return for England?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: Certainly.

RATHDOWN UNION WORKHOUSE.

MR. CLANCY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he has received a copy of a resolution of the Rathdown Board of Guardians as to the insufficiency of accommodation for children and the lunatic poor in the Rathdown Union Workhouse, and other workhouses in Ireland; (2) whether it is the intention of the Government to comply with the wish expressed in that resolution that legislation should be proposed at an early date dealing with that subject; and (3) whether the Government intend to reintroduce, and make an effort to pass into law, this Session its Bill of last Session dealing with the reform of workhouse management and the amalgamation of unions?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The reply to each of the three paragraphs of this Question is in the affirmative.

DOWN COUNTY COURT JUDGESHIP.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he received resolutions passed by public meetings held in Mayobridge and Newry, County Down, and ordered to be sent to him, protesting against the alleged intention of the Government to appoint Mr. Walker Craig County Court Judge of Down, in room of Judge Roche retired, on the grounds that Mr. Craig was the Government candidate at the last Parliamentary election in County Down, and is at present the adopted candidate of the Unionist Party for the next Parliamentary Election in the same county, seeing that, if appointed, he would have the revising of the Parliamentary Register, which is made up of a majority of Mr. Craig's political opponents who defeated him when a candidate; and (2) whether he is yet in a position to state if the appointment has been made; and, if so, give the name of the person appointed?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The reply to the first paragraph is in the affirmative, and to the second in the negative.

CORK POST OFFICE.

MR. MAURICE HEALY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, when the buildings in connection with the Cork Post Office extension will be commenced; and, what sum it is proposed to spend on the work?

MR. HANBURY: It has been necessary to seek compulsory powers for the acquisition of certain of the interests in the properties which it is desired to obtain for the enlargement of the head Post Office at Cork, and the case is included in the Post Office Sites Bill which it is proposed to introduce in the present Session of Parliament. No estimate has yet been prepared of the cost of the work, nor can any date be fixed when it will be begun.

TRANSHIPMENT OF MAILS (KINGSTOWN AND HOLYHEAD).

MR. MAURICE HEALY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether the question of improving the method of transhipping the mails at Kingstown and Holyhead was re-investigated by the Post Office last year; whether any correspondence then took place between the Postmaster General, the Railway Company, and the Steam Packet Company on the subject; whether any attempt has been made to get rid of the difficulties which arose in the year 1890; and whether the later correspondence on the subject (if any) will be published?

The HON. MEMBER also asked the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, what the difficulty is in improving the system of transhipping the mails at Kingstown and Holyhead; what proposals on the subject have been made and considered; and whether the difficulty has arisen with the Railway Company, the Steam Packet Company, or the Post Office?

MR. HANBURY: The question of improving the transhipping the mails at Kingstown and Holyhead has been a subject of consideration by the Board of Trade and the Post Office during the last year, but no definite results have been arrived at. There was no correspondence in that year between the Postmaster General, the Railway Company, and the Packet Company. Nothing has been done towards getting rid of the difficulties which formed the subject of correspondence in 1890. The plan of crates proposed by the Packet Company involved the construction of special vans and the addition of considerable weight to the trains, and the Railway Company would not undertake the responsibility of working the service under such conditions. No fresh methods of transfer free from those difficulties have been suggested. There is no later correspondence on the subject to publish.

ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE, SANDHURST.

*SIR JAMES FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether the sum of £1,200 taken in the Estimates for a canteen at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, includes provision for a recreation room?

MR. BRODRICK: A recreation room already exists which is used for performances, concerts, and lectures. It adjoins the canteen but is not connected with it. The sum of £1,200 will be expended on the canteen, and in improving its comfort and accommodation.

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: Is my hon. Friend aware that there are 200 soldiers and servants at the Military College who have no place for recreation?

MR. BRODRICK: The question has been considered, and we were only able to go as far as the canteen this year.

CHILDREN'S METROPOLITAN ASYLUMS BOARD.

MR. E. H. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, in the Darenth Asylum of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, there are about 300 children who are feeble-minded, but not imbecile, and are now receiving education; whether all these children are legally paupers; and is it his intention to remove these 300 children from the care of the Metropolitan Asylums Board to that of the proposed Children's Asylums Board; and, if so, how will he effect the transfer?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I am informed that there are no children at the Darenth Asylum who are feeble-minded but not imbecile. The children at the asylum are legally paupers. It is not the intention to remove the children from the Darenth Asylum.

VOLUNTEER ARTILLERY (1ST CAITHNESS).

MR. T. C. H. HEDDERWICK (Wick Burghs): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that there exists a strong desire in Caithness to raise a second company in connection with the 1st Caithness Volunteer Artillery; and whether, having regard to that desire and to the advisability of increasing that branch of our National defences, he will favourably consider an application to raise such an additional company?

Mr. BRODRICK: As a full complement of artillery exists for the works to be defended in case of mobilisation, it is not considered desirable to increase the strength of this garrison artillery corps.

ESSEX REGIMENT (2ND BATTALION).

Mr. LOUIS SINCLAIR: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether fever has broken out in the 2nd Battalion of the Essex Regiment now stationed in India; and, if so, could he state to what extent; if the 2nd Battalion of the Essex Regiment left England in 1882 for foreign service, and has never returned to the United Kingdom since that time; and, if this is so, whether, after such a lengthened period of foreign service, the Secretary of State for War will recall that battalion home as soon as possible to allow it to be stationed in its own county for a time?

Mr. BRODRICK: In the return from the battalion, dated February 1st, the health is described as "indifferent," but the numbers in hospital were about normal; and the prevailing diseases appeared to be of a specific character. The average tour abroad of an infantry battalion is 17 years. The 2nd Battalion Essex Regiment left England in 1882, and is ninth on the roster for return home.

POST OFFICE TELEPHONE EXCHANGES.

Mr. A. D. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will grant the two Returns on the Paper asking for particulars relating to the construction, maintenance, and earnings of the telephone exchanges carried on by the Post Office?

Mr. HANBURY: No, Sir; we shall not be able to give those Returns.

Mr. PROVAND: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the Post Office refuses to give information with regard to construction, maintenance, and earnings?

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! The reply has been given.

POST OFFICE SORTING CLERKS.

Mr. MAURICE HEALY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether the system of open competition for the position of sorting clerk existing in London has yet been extended to Dublin and other large towns?

Mr. HANBURY: The system of open competition has been extended to Dublin and certain other large towns. The competitions are, however, not for the position of sorting clerk, but for that of learner. The first was held on the 16th of last month.

CRETE.

Mr. JOHN DILLON (Mayo, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Greek Vice Consul and all the Greek residents have been ordered to leave Canea; and, if so, for what reason, and under whose authority has this been done?

*Mr. CURZON: I am sorry to say that we have no reply to our telegram of inquiry sent yesterday.

Mr. DILLON: I will repeat the Question on Monday.

*Mr. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): I beg to ask my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs a question of which I will give him notice if he prefers. It is, what steps were taken to make known to the Cretan insurgents that the autonomy of the island was assured by the Great Powers, and whether it is the case that the information in question was withheld by the intermediary to whom it was entrusted? I will also ask my right hon. Friend without notice whether he has, since making a statement on the subject, received any explanation respecting the failure of the Greek Commodore to communicate to the insurgents round Canea the message of the Admirals of the Great Powers forbidding any advance, and also a communication from the same source offering assistance to the wounded?

Mr. DILLON: Before the right hon. Gentleman answers that question, I should like to ask him to state at the same time why the Admirals before Canea threw upon the Greek Commodore the responsibility of conveying this warning, and why they did not take the proper steps to see on their own responsibility and to their own knowledge that the warning was conveyed?

*MR. CURZON: It is very easy to answer the last Question. The Admirals understood—I believe with good reason—that communications were passing between the Greek Commodore and the insurgents, and it was in the interests of peace and with a desire to avoid any unfortunate results that they very properly and naturally, as it seems to me, made the Greek Commodore the vehicle of their communication. In answer to my right hon. Friend, I shall be obliged if he will put his first Question on the Paper for Monday, when I shall be better able to answer him. In regard to his second Question, we have no information beyond that which I communicated yesterday.

*SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary a question of which I have given him private notice. It is in reference to a notice which appears in the newspapers to-day, that a meeting has been called in Trafalgar Square for Sunday—[*Nationalist cheers*]—with a view to putting pressure on Her Majesty's Government with respect to their policy in Crete. [*Nationalist cheers.*] I wish to ask whether that meeting has received the right hon. Gentleman's permission. [*Opposition cries of* "Oh!" *and Nationalist cries of* "Coercion!"]

*SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: I have not seen the notice to which my right hon. Friend alludes; but since I got his private notice I have made inquiries; and I have ascertained that in accordance with the regulations governing Trafalgar Square in regard to the holding of meetings, the Secretary of the Liberal Forward Movement—[*Ministerial laughter*]—gave notice to the Commissioner of Police that it was desired to hold a meeting in Trafalgar Square on the 14th inst. with reference to the Cretan question. His notice was perfectly in order, and permission was accordingly given—[*Opposition cheers*]—by the Commissioner.

*SIR C. DILKE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, in the absence of the Leader of the House, whether it is the intention of the Government to make any statement on Monday as to the communications passing between the Powers. A full statement was asked for a day or two ago, and I understood that it was promised, although not at a fixed date. In the Parliament of a foreign Power such a statement has been promised for Monday, and I want to know whether the Government will make a similar statement here on Monday?

*MR. CURZON: I am not at the present moment aware of any such intention, but of course, I will communicate to the Leader of the House the Question of the right hon. Gentleman.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM.

MR. T. LOUGH (Islington, W.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, considering the urgency of completing South Kensington Museum, the Government is willing to introduce a Bill similar to the Military Works (Loan) Bill, under which the money for doing so might be borrowed and repaid over a period of thirty years?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I am afraid that in view of the great cost of the erection of public offices in London, which have recently been sanctioned, the Government cannot undertake to proceed with the extension or completion of the buildings at South Kensington.

ADJOURNMENT (DINNER HOUR).

*SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Monmouthshire, W.), who was received with Opposition cheers, said: Mr. Speaker, With your kind permission, I desire to ask your statement to the House upon a matter which affects what I may call the material interests of Members. [*Laughter.*] There seems to have been some misapprehension upon this subject, and which might produce in future discomfort to Members of this House. It will be in the recollection of those who took part in the Debates on Procedure in 1888 that this matter—I refer to the adjournment of the House for the purpose of what is called dinner—[*laughter*]—was the subject of certain proposals by the Government of the time, and the formal proposal was that there should be an adjournment from 8 o'clock until 9. There was a great deal of debate upon that subject, but it all resulted in a statement by the then Leader of the House, whose judicious and courteous treatment of everybody will be remembered by all—[*cheers*]

—I refer to the late Mr. W. H. Smith. Having collected what he considered to be the view and feeling of the House of Commons, Mr. Smith made a statement, of which I will read two sentences. He said

> "he had no hesitation in saying, as he had stated earlier in the evening, that the desire of the Government was to meet the convenience of the House and to provide for the dispatch of business by men in physical condition to discharge it with advantage to the country."

[*laughter*]—and he added, with regard to the suspension of the sitting at 8 o'clock for an hour, that

> "he might state at once that, having gathered the sense of the House on the point, the Government would not press that proposal; but it ought to be understood that in recent years it had become the practice for the Speaker to retire for a limited period between 8 and 9 o'clock, and that practice had been continued, except that the House would probably agree that the interval might very well be extended to half an hour."

That was the rational and practical outcome of the Debates of 1888. There was no cast-iron rule laid down, but it was understood that there was to be an adjournment of from 20 minutes to half an hour. According to my experience that has been the practice that has been followed, though there may have been occasional deviations from it. I am sure the House would be glad to hear from you, Sir, a statement as to the practice. I know the impression in some quarters has been that the rule was merely for the benefit of the occupant of the Chair. I do not know if that was the origin of the interval, but certainly since 1888 it has not been regarded as the object, as is apparent from the citations I have made. The suspension has been considered for the benefit of the whole House, and I hope that, by your ruling, that will be established in such a way that no doubt can exist in the future.

*MR. SPEAKER: I have always understood that the suspension for half an hour was not an indulgence which was granted by the House to itself, but was in the nature of a concession to the natural infirmities of the occupant of the Chair—[*laughter*]—who would otherwise have to remain in his place for nine or ten consecutive hours. I have looked at the Debate which took place in 1888, and it does not appear to me that Mr. Smith was proposing in what he said to deal with exceptional cases such as may arise when the Chairman and the Speaker both obtain the necessary intermission without the operation of the half-hour's suspension. Therefore, it appears to me that when the Speaker and the Chairman, both of them are in that position, either of them is justified in continuing the sitting without interruption of business unless he is otherwise ordered by the House. That I take to have been the practice, and I consider that to be still the practice, notwithstanding what passed in 1888. But there is another consideration to which I would call the attention of the House—namely, that the occasions when such a situation arises are extremely rare, and that when they do occur they probably cause inconvenience to some Members of the House—["hear, hear!"]—by taking them by surprise. Therefore, though I have stated what I consider to be the practice which justifies the Speaker or the Chairman in continuing the sitting, I think it is desirable that some more fixed rule should be acted on by the House. ["Hear, hear!"] There is some difficulty in precisely fixing the rule, because there are cases when I think the House would agree that it is desirable that the Chair should not be too closely pinned down. For example, sometimes the business before the House gets through with unexpected rapidity, so that by sitting on until half-past 9 or 10 o'clock, the whole of the business is disposed of without the Speaker or Chairman leaving the Chair at all. ["Hear, hear!"] There must be freedom to the Chair to deal with cases of that kind, but, subject to that general supervision which the Chair exercises over the business of the House, I shall certainly make it my practice—one which will, I hope, meet with the general assent of the House—when the business of the House is going to last till 12 o'clock, to see that there is an interval of half an hour. [*Opposition cheers.*] In making that statement I must not be understood as saying a word in derogation of anything which has been done or held hitherto in this House. I have stated what I consider the practice has been up to this time, but I think more will be gained by laying down a more fixed rule than is gained by saving perhaps half an hour in the course of a Session. ["Hear, hear!"] I shall follow the practice I have suggested, reserving it to myself and to the Chairman on special ocasions, such as I have mentioned, to regulate the business of the House in such a way as to meet the general convenience. ["Hear, hear!"]

INDUSTRIES (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred from Monday next till Monday 29th March.

MOTION.

TROUT FISHING CLOSE TIME (SCOTLAND).

Bill to provide a close time for trout fishing in Scotland, ordered to be brought in by Sir Herbert Maxwell, Mr. Shaw Stewart, Sir John Kinloch, Mr. Hozier, Mr. Malcolm, and Mr. Vernon-Wentworth; presented accordingly, and read the First time; to be read a Second time upon Friday next and to be printed.—[Bill 158.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY.

Considered in Committee.

[Mr. STUART-WORTLEY in the Chair.]

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1897-8.

100,050 Men and Boys.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) asked whether the First Lord of the Admiralty was not going to make a statement.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. G. J. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square) said that it would be more convenient if he made the statement at a later stage, when the questions raised in the discussion might be answered.

*ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne) said that everyone had read the general statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty with interest. It was one of the most satisfactory statements which naval men had seen for many years. But he was not prepared for so large an increase in the *personnel*, though he rejoiced that the First Lord had made a concession to naval opinion. The whole service would rejoice to see the new grade of warrant officers created in favour of a certain number of engine-room artificers. It would be greatly valued by the men, and would be for the best interest of the service. He noticed that the training ship at Queenstown for boys had not yet begun to fulfil its duty. The ship was sent there nearly a year ago. Why the delay? He was glad that the Admiralty had added another training ship to the *Northampton*; but for the lads who joined, and who were 17 or 18 years of age, a more liberal diet was desirable. They were not mere boys, and they were generally emaciated when they joined. As to the new system of training for the naval cadets, it was too soon to criticise it yet, but he was glad the age had been raised. The *Britannia* had, he saw, had the *Racer* attached to it; but he would suggest that another such vessel was necessary, as one could not be enough for the work. He was always glad to see an increase of the Royal Marines, and he wished that it had been larger. There were grievances among the Marines which had not yet been put right. The majors of Marines were kept three years before they received an increase of pay, while the majors in the Army were only kept waiting two years. This was a gross inequality which was keenly felt. He was sorry that the Admiralty had not yet provided proper ranges for the Marines at Plymouth. Then there was the burning question of deductions from the full rations when on shore. This grievance the Marines still smarted under. The Army were relieved from it in 1873. While the Marines were afloat, they were, of course, treated on the same lines as the seamen; but on shore, they came under military rules, and it was most unfair that they should not receive the concession which was made to the Army as long ago as 1873. When Lord Cardwell proposed the abolition of the stoppage he said, "It is exceedingly unpopular with the soldiers." It was just as unpopular with the Marines now. It was no answer to say, as he had been told by the Secretary to the Admiralty, that he wanted the Marines to be treated as soldiers one day and as Marines the next. He only wanted them treated on fair and proper lines; and where they had remedied a grievance in the Army the same grievance ought to be put right in the case of Marines when on shore. He had discussed this question with commandants of Marines and ex-Adjutant Generals and ex-First Sea Lords. He would be happy to give the name of the latter with whom he had discussed it, and this ex-First Lord had admitted to him that the present system was a great injustice to the Marines; and indeed he went so far as to say that he himself ought to have dealt with it long ago. He had never yet found a naval man who was not sensible of the injustice, and he hoped the matter would be inquired into and dealt with on liberal terms. They were all glad to hear the Naval Reserve were to be dealt with on new lines and according to new methods. If there was any criticism to be made at all it would be that the Reserve was still, in many points of view, not large enough. The hon. Member for Dundee had put it very well when he laid it down that the Reserve ought to be in proportion to the total active *personnel.* He was greatly pleased to see that at last the 12-years seamen who do not re-engage were allowed to enter the Reserve force as "qualified men," and were to be granted a pension of £12 at the age of 60. He did not at all agree with the observations of the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean, who stated that the French battleships were more powerfully armed than ours. That was not correct. Our first-class battleships were more powerfully armed than the French, and had nothing to fear in any comparison. An important matter to which he had to call attention was the armament of the new ships of the first-class cruiser type. They were powerful vessels of an entirely new type, but their armament was a great departure from anything he had ever known in the Naval service, and he wanted the First Lord to justify that departure. It used to be the custom, before any change in the armaments of ships was carried out, that the opinion of the head of the gunnery establishment at Portsmouth was always invited and expressed. He should like to know whether the captain of that great establishment had been consulted in this matter, or whether it had been left entirely to the officials inside the walls of the Board of Admiralty. What was the good of one of these first-class cruisers, supposing she was chasing a French or any other battleship, if she could not hull that vessel? A ship might very well be escaping and trying to reach its port after an accident at sea. A cruiser without a 9·2 gun could not stop that ship. The more he studied the armament question and the valuable Return which had been obtained by the Member for the Forest of Dean the more he was convinced that it was not satisfactory. He did not find a single officer who approved of the low armaments of the "Eclipse" class. He trusted the First Lord would relieve his mind from misgivings on the point. He was informed that there was no means of communicating direct with the men in the casemates. The order had first to go to what was called the "exchange," and then it was distributed over the casemates. What was wanting was direct communication from the conning-tower to the casemates. He next referred to the grievances of stokers, chief petty officers, and others, and had regretted that they were still unredressed. and that they had to be brought before the House year after year. He also complained as to the toll at Haslar Bridge. Even poor women going to visit their suffering bread-winners at the hospital had to pay toll.

*The SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. W. E. Macartney, Antrim, S.): That has been settled.

*Admiral FIELD was glad of that, but hoped it would be settled by joint purchase by the War Office, the Admiralty, and the ratepayers. As to the lamentable state of things as to the health of the troops in India, a great mistake had been made in doing away with the operation of the C.D. Acts. They were, at first, only suspended, and if they cut the suspending rope the Acts would be again in force, but they have since been repealed. As in the Army so it was in the Navy, and in Haslar Hospital there were 700 seamen and Marines suffering. He hoped something would be done to remedy this gigantic evil.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee) said he was in hopes that the right hon. Gentleman would have commenced by making a short statement in reply to some of the points raised in the Debate of that day week. Of the general topics which had been raised the right hon.

Gentleman had referred only to the question raised by the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean. They were now considering the whole scheme of the Government, and he wished to mention one or two things that were in his mind last week. The First Lord began by admitting a great decrease in one particular Vote (8). He had looked through the Votes, and he thought that every Vote except this one showed an increase. The First Lord made no allusion to what was generally considered a most important matter as far as shipbuilding went, and that was a comparison between the money devoted to new construction in one year and in another. He had endeavoured to get at the figures in order to make a comparison. It appeared to him from the figures before him that, instead of there being a decrease of only half a million this year for new construction, there was in reality, after making an allowance of £75,000, which was the sum to be expended upon the new Royal yacht, a decrease of £1,100,000 in the proposed expenditure for the year upon new construction. He wished to know from the right hon. Gentleman whether these figures were approximately accurate, and, if they were, whether the right hon. Gentleman would give the House some explanation of the reason for this large decrease in the sum to be expended upon new construction. He was making no complaint on the subject, and no doubt the right hon. Gentleman would be able to give a satisfactory explanation of the matter. That was all he had to say in relation to the apparent change of policy with regard to new construction. As far as the new battleships were concerned, nothing appeared in the Estimates to throw any light upon their type or armament. No doubt some information on the subject had appeared in a Unionist journal, which appeared to be inspired, and it was singularly accurate as far as the ordinary Estimates were concerned.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: The journal to which the right hon. Gentleman refers was not inspired by me. The statement that appeared in the journal in question was due, not to inspiration, but to some scandal, which I deplore in the deepest manner. No idea whatever was given to the journal by the Admiralty, and no one can be more annoyed than I was at the publication of the statement. No doubt its publication was the result of some deplorable purchase of documents or of some other means by which the information was obtained. The documents ought never to have left the Admiralty. ["Hear, hear!"] I can only repeat that I gave no inspiration to the journal. [*Cheers and Ministerial cries of* "Withdraw."

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: Withdraw what? I merely made use of a passing phrase. [*Renewed Ministerial cries of* "Withdraw."] I never intended to charge either the right hon. Gentleman or the Admiralty with having inspired the journal in question. I do not know where the information was obtained from, but it was remarkably approximate to the truth. There has evidently been a deplorable breach of official secrecy, and if the right hon. Gentleman could make any one responsible for it he would have no warmer supporter in the matter than myself. The right hon. Gentleman must not suppose that in using the phrase "inspired" I was making any reflection upon himself. The statement, however, does profess to be the result of inspiration. [*Ministerial cries of* "Oh!" *and* "Withdraw."] I never for a moment imagined that in using the phrase I could be supposed to be making any imputation upon the right hon. Gentleman or his colleagues. [*Renewed Ministerial cries of* "Withdraw."] What am I to withdraw? I have explained the sense in which I used the word, and that ought to be sufficient. [*Ministerial cries of* "Withdraw."]

MR. EDWIN LAWRENCE (Cornwall, Truro): I rise to order, Sir. The word "inspiration" always means inspiration by the Government. ["Hear, hear!"]

THE CHAIRMAN (MR. STUART-WORTLEY, Sheffield, Hallam): As the hon. Member has raised the point of order, I may say that I do not think that the word "inspired" is of itself so unparliamentary or so offensive that it requires to be withdrawn. But if the hon. Gentleman chooses to make it the foundation of a charge he must either make the charge good or he must withdraw the expression. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. E. ROBERTSON said that he never intended to make any charge whatever against the right hon. Gentleman.

["Hear, hear!"] With regard to the new Royal yacht, it was clear that it was of a perfectly exceptional character, and would be non-effective. He wished to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether this vessel might not be so constructed that she might be serviceable in certain circumstances as part of the effective Fleet. The sum of £75,000 only was asked for in the Estimates for the year in respect of that vessel, and the only further information they had with regard to her was that she was to be finished within three years. He should be glad if the right hon. Gentleman would inform the Committee how much her total cost would be. The only other item connected with shipbuilding to which he would refer was the question of the boilers, and on that he only wished to say that he was extremely glad to find from the First Lord's statement that the experiments with the water-tube boilers had been a complete success. ["Hear, hear!"] Turning to manning, he was met with a difficulty on the question of the 6,300 additional men, that in the First Lord's statement they were accounted for in detail in a particular way, in the summary of the Estimates in an entirely different way, and, finally, in Vote A itself, in which the numbers were taken, in a different way again. The First Lord's statement gave the number of officers at 126. In the summary the collective number of officers to be added was given as 127, and in Vote A as 141. The same sort of discrepancy appeared in every item; for instance, 1,000 Marines were mentioned in the First Lord's statement, whereas in the book he could only find 980 accounted for. He might have passed over something which explained these apparent discrepancies, but they were apparent, and it was important that the Committee should know on which of the three statements they were entitled to rely. He congratulated the right hon. Gentleman without reserve on the statement that a new grade of engineer officers of warrant rank had been established for the encouragement of engine-room artificers. ["Hear, hear!"] That was a matter which the late Board had had under consideration, and he should be glad to know from the right hon. Gentleman how the technical difficulties which were involved in this change had been got over. Another experiment initiated by the late Board was the institution of the training ship *Northampton*. He was glad to see that that experiment had been developed considerably, and, apparently, with much success. When that experiment was about a year old the late Board communicated certain statistics as to its results to the House, and he would ask the right hon. Gentleman to bring that statement up to date. He was much interested in the success of this experiment, because he thought it was a weakening of the service that recruiting should be practically confined to one district—in fact, nothing would delight him more than that the whole Empire should be contributory to the *personnel* of the Navy. [*Cheers.*] In connection with the *personnel*, there was one conspicuous omission from the Estimates which would cause some disappointment. Two years ago the experiment was initiated of introducing a new class of naval officer taken direct from the Mercantile Marine. He had been looking forward to an announcement of the results of that remarkable experiment, but he could find no allusion to it, and he would be glad if the right hon. Gentleman could tell the Committee how it was working. While on the question of *personnel*, he would turn for a moment to the Naval Reserve. While the numbers on the active list had nearly doubled during the last 20 years, the numbers of the Reserve had nearly stood still, and he would suggest that in future increases in the *personnel*, regard should be had to the Royal Naval Reserve. He had a few observations to make on the head of Naval Works. Two months ago he was able to carry out a long-cherished intention of visiting Gibraltar for the purpose of seeing the progress of the naval works there. Anyone who was familiar with the place would be at once struck with the magnitude of the work done. ["Hear, hear!"] As time had gone on he had been more and more impressed with the greater urgency of the mole as compared with the dock. The original intention of the late Board of Admiralty was that the two works should go on together, but the completion of the new sea wall seemed now to be a matter of greater urgency than the completion of the dock. He understood that it would be possible to complete the sea wall within four years. If any sacrifice was to be made as between the two sets of works, the sacrifice should be in favour of the mole, so that there might be as soon as possible at Gibraltar a place of refuge for our ships against attack. He should be glad to have some information as to the proposed commercial mole, by which the harbour was to be closed at the northern end. Were the expenses of this mole to be defrayed by the Colonial Government or by the Imperial Government? He was glad that in connection with the Dartmouth College the Admiralty were going to put in force the compulsory powers conferred upon them by the first Naval Defence Act. The First Lord of the Admiralty did right to make effective use of these powers for the purpose of acquiring the new site which he wanted at Dartmouth. Naval Members, and all who were interested in naval Cadets, would be glad to know what kind of building was to be erected. In conclusion, he asked when the new Naval Works Bill would be introduced, what were the items of expenditure which the right hon. Gentleman proposed to add to those already sanctioned by Parliament, and whether the new Bill was to be a loan Bill like the first?

[The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS, took the Chair.]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: The hon. and learned Member and the gallant Admiral have raised a good many points, and, as some points also remain over from the last Debate, it may be convenient that I should reply now. I will begin by dealing with the final part of the speech of the hon. and learned Member. The Works Bill will be a Loan Bill, but it is not yet in such a state that I can name any date for its introduction. Sundry surveys are still under consideration, and that makes it impossible for us to arrive at any final enumeration of the various items which will be included in the Measure. With reference to the works at Gibraltar, we have decided upon the commercial mole, which we consider to be far better than the plan of dolphins which formed part of the first proposals of the late Board of Admiralty. This commercial mole will be undertaken jointly by Her Majesty's Government and the Colonial Government as far as expenses are concerned, and the matter will be dealt with in the new Bill. With regard to the Naval College at Dartmouth, we are not yet able to put before the House of Commons final designs, but we shall do our best to give full information to the House as soon as we are in a position to do so; and I shall then also gave information, possibly in the form of a memorandum, with regard to the changes which have been made in the system of education for the Cadets, who in future will inhabit the College. I pass now to the first part of the speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman. The Committee expects some further information with reference to the programme of shipbuilding which we have placed before them. As the Committee know, that programme includes four battleships, three third-class cruisers, four twin-screw gunboats, and two torpedo-boat destroyers. With regard to the character of the battle-ships, I will undertake that before these ships are begun the House shall have full information as to their designs, and the opportunity for supplying such information would probably arise on the consideration of Vote 8. But there are reasons why, when we propose to build battleships which are to be commenced some time hence, it is undesirable to pledge ouselves in advance. It is better to have as long an interval as possible, because that gives one the opportunity of watching the development of shipbuilding elsewhere, which may have some influence and bearing upon our own plans. At the same time, I would say generally that we mean to have four powerful battleships, and that there are two classes to either of which they might belong. I mean the *Majestic* class or the *Canopus* class. We know at this moment what we intend, but these intentions might be modified, and I trust the Committee will not press me to give more information on this subject now. ["Hear, hear!"] We think it very important that these ships should belong, if possible, to one of the classes which already exist. ["Hear, hear!"] We have not arrived at a point which to us is very satisfactory. We have got ships, which, though criticised to some extent in certain quarters, satisfy public opinion and realise the intentions of their designers, and upon which no serious or large improvements are at present proposed. I believe there is nothing which impresses foreign critics more in connection with our Fleet than the fact that we are able, in a greater degree than any other country, to put into line a number of ships of precisely the same speed and design, forming a thoroughly homogeneous squadron. The advantage of this is felt by all classes of seamen. The men who are passed from one ship to another understand all their duties on the vessel to which they are transferred almost as soon as they get on board. There was an occasion lately when men were transferred from one battleship to another, and within one week every man knew exactly his post, the character of the vessel being familiar to him. I attach great importance to that state of things, and I think that my view is shared by the great majority of the Committee. ["Hear, hear!"] The same observations apply to the third-class cruisers. As far as we can ascertain, the *Pelorus* class fulfils precisely the intentions of the designers and the duties which it was meant to perform. I have no hesitation, therefore, in saying that the new third-class cruisers will be constructed on precisely the same lines, with perhaps some minor improvements. Then the next point is one not without interest, and that is that Her Majesty's present Government, and probably their predecessors, have found the want when the occasion arose of sufficient light-draught vessels that would navigate those many rivers where there are so many difficulties, and where it is most desirable to give effective support to our representatives. Hitherto it has generally been necessary to build special boats; and I take the case of the Nile. When the Nile has to be navigated there are special boats for the Nile, and the same observation holds good with reference to the Niger and other rivers. We have held that a supply of gunboats should be kept ready to put on the spot where they are wanted on an emergency. That will account for eight light-draught boats under construction now in the programme of 1896-7, and for the four new twin screw gunboats which are down in the present programme. They are stern wheelers. There is considerable curiosity among some of our neighbours to know what we are doing in this respect, and I do not wish to make any statement before our designs are finally approved. Then the Committee will see that we ask for two torpedo-boat destroyers, and for this reason. Practically we have completed our programme of 92 torpedo-boat destroyers, which was the number which, looking to every station at which we should have to place them, would be necessary. We have kept over these two torpedo-boat destroyers with the view of utilising any further improvements that can be made in this most useful class of vessel. Possibly the designers of this kind of craft will be able to produce still more rapid boats, boats with some improvements which we should be able to utilise in those two torpedo-boat destroyers which are in our programme. I do not mean to say it may not be necessary to increase the number of this most useful craft. They answer the purpose not only of catching torpedo-boats, but their speed is such that they form most useful dispatch vessels, carrying at enormous speed information from one spot to another; and I believe that they quite realise the hopes of the Admiralty. With regard to the ships to be built there is one point in our new programme which I probably should refer to—that is the question of the Royal Yacht. The hon. Member asked whether it would be made a man-of-war and fitted as a cruiser. After mature consideration, the comfort of the inhabitants of the dock would be interfered with by constructing it as a cruiser to a much greater degree than would be the value of the cruiser. It would be very difficult to make an effective cruiser in any case, and it means occupying a great deal of room. There are great inconveniences of various kinds, and we have come to the conclusion that it would not be expedient to build the same type of yacht for narrow waters. With regard to the cost, the design is not yet complete, so that I am unable to give the total sum of money. But I should like to give to the Committee the dates of the building of the yachts which are at present at the disposal of the Royal Family. The *Victoria and Albert* was launched in 1855, the *Osborne* in 1870, the *Alberta* in 1863, and the little *Elfin* in 1849. I think the Committee will see that it is not lately nor often that any member of the Royal Family has appealed to the House of Commons to supply a yacht. [*Cheers.*] I am certain that this proposal, notwithstanding what the hon. Member has said, may be accepted with some cordiality by the majority of the House of Commons. [*Cheers.*]

I now pass to the question which was dealt with by the hon. Member, and I think by some other Members the other evening, with reference to the adequacy of our proposals and the time those ships are to be laid down. I demur to the principle that when you have made an effort such as that of last year to increase the Estimates by £2,300,000, that necessarily forms a standard which must be followed for two or three years consecutively. It must depend on the amount of work done, on the ships you desire to build: and I think it would be unwise to say that the expenditure of one year must necessarily follow the expenditure of the previous year. Last year we frankly told the House that we were making not only a great effort to increase the fleet, but to expedite and hurry on the construction of certain ships. The natural result of such a course was to throw on that particular year a particular burden. I informed the House that we knowingly lightened this year by £600,000, whereas last year it was burdened by the same sum. If it were otherwise, if the Government had the fear to reduce its expenditure in any year subject to the kind of criticism I was prepared for, it would then shrink from taking steps one year to perform a certain special work and to expedite business lest it should be a form of complaint next year that it had done nothing. Suppose we had pursued the opposite policy and had spent £600,000 and left it for this year. Then in this year we should be perfectly free from the charge that we were increasing our Estimates, yet in the two years we should not have done an atom more than we have done. I ask the Committee to look at the two years together, and I think they will consider our expenditure adequate to the demands which are required. The hon. Member will see that it is difficult to follow the precise figures put before me with reference to the Supplemental Estimates, but I think he did not reckon in them the amount of the new construction in this year. The new construction is £6,791,000. Possibly the hon. Member has missed the point that £150,000 comes from stores. The hon. Member adds on the Supplemental Estimates, but we cannot tell what the Supplemental Estimates might be in this year. If in this year we were to find that we have made inadequate provision for the point we should not hesitate to come to the House of Commons for the purpose of increasing the expenditure. But what I put before the Committee is this—that you have not only to look at the expenditure but at that which is being done by the expenditure, and to see whether what we are doing now is not a vast undertaking. In this year there will be completed 66 ships; there will be 108 under construction. The liabilities from last year, when we undertook so large a programme, are £6,200,000; and, of course when you have under construction so large a figure it must necessarily follow that the construction of new ships laid down cannot equal in amount to those laid down in previous years. The question is—is the programme in itself sufficient, looking at the matter as a whole, not merely from one year to another, but the programme of last year with the programme of this year? Is it not an immense programme, and is it not an immense amount of work which will be undertaken? How has that programme of ours been settled and on what principle? It has been settled on the principle generally of seeing what force we might be likely to have to meet. It has been formed looking at the normal shipbuilding of the various countries. We took a survey, and the result of that survey is embodied in the Estimates we propose. But there is what I may call a balance of power in the navies of Europe; and we should watch with some anxiety that that balance should not be disturbed by any abnormal efforts on the part of any other Power. [*Cheers.*] I am not frightened by programmes. You have programmes of all sorts—political and naval programmes—and they are not always excellent. Some of the largest programmes of foreign countries have never come into execution, and therefore when a programme is first launched to the world we cannot take it too seriously, because, like other programmes, it may be for home consumption, or it may be for foreign consumption. I make these remarks in order to assure the Committee that though we may not take into consideration any particular programme, yet if any abnormal efforts are made or any abnormal programme is actually put into execution that would seem to disturb the general amount of naval power which would belong to different countries, certainly I should think it to be my duty, and the Government would think it to be its duty, to reconsider its position; and they would be perfectly certain, whatever happened, if it were necessary in consequence of abnormal efforts on the part of any other Power to make corresponding efforts here, to receive the support of the House of Commons. [*Cheers.*] Now I come to the point of time of laying down these ships—the point raised by the hon. Member for Devonport the other day and continued by the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken; and with this question the subject of discharges of men from the dockyards has been coupled. The right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean Division said that practically the ships were not to be begun in the next financial year; but everybody who knows anything about the beginning of ships knows how important it is to have your designs ready and your forms of order and tenders prepared, and that by this preparation you may save months in construction. Well, the money we have obtained will allow for four months of actual construction; therefore, I demur to the suggestion that our programme does not include the building of any ships at all in the year. But why, we are asked, defer the construction of ships? I think Members of the Committee would not desire that men should be taken off from the work of completion of ships in hand, delaying this work while new work is commenced. Such a course would weaken our power, because we are less strong with a larger number of unfinished ships than if we devote ourselves to the completion of those we have in hand. But, it may be said, you may take on fresh men; and there is the difficulty, for if you do that you will have the question of discharges to meet. Our object is to have as little of the zigzag policy, as it has been called, as possible. If we commence these ships far in advance of the time we have proposed, and take on men for the purpose, next year we should have to discharge a number of workmen; and our object is to keep the number of men employed at as even a level as we can. Last year we entered a number of men for specific work, and now the discharge of these men is made the subject of complaint against us. These men knew perfectly well that they were being engaged solely for a particular business, and yet when the time for their discharge comes it is held to be a reduction of the normal strength of the dockyards. The hon. Member for Devonport implied that as we are taking less money there must be discharges; but hon. Members should be aware that every year there is a certain amount of waste, a certain number of men who leave the establishment; and a considerable proportion of the reductions will be due to wastage by deaths, superannuation, discharges with gratuity on account of age, and voluntary retirement. The discharges are about 180 men in the whole year, and the hon. Gentleman need scarcely trouble himself about that, for it is impossible to foresee, with such an immense amount of work in hand, how precisely the building in the dockyards will proceed side by side with the construction by contract. From strikes and other causes contract work may not make the progress anticipated, and in consequence the balance of the money voted for construction would return to the Treasury, but, with the consent of the Treasury, we transfer the money not used for contract work to yard shipbuilding. It is impossible to say how much progress may be actually made with contract building and how much in the dockyards. There will always be a certain amount of elasticity, and the Committee will understand how difficult it is in these enormous labour transactions to adjust the amount precisely. We have a large number of men in the dockyards, and we wish to employ them economically, and at the same time we wish to have a sufficient margin, so that we can, in case sufficient progress is not made with ships building by contract, find employment for men who would otherwise leave our yards. This is the principle upon which we act. I know there is a desire that we should take on fresh men rather than work overtime; but when there is special work to be proceeded with we give a small amount of overtime, the men working an extra hour a day, and so avoid fluctuations in the number of men employed. If we take on fresh men instead of working overtime, it will probably next year be necessary to discharge the men again; and so we meet that difficulty with which every man who has had anything to do with the Admiralty is so well acquainted.

There is no real diminution in expenditure; our programme is constructed on the basis of seeing what ships are required and what repairs are required, and we have arranged the dates of the ships in the manner most economical for the yards and causing the least fluctuation in the *personnel* of the establishments. And now I come to the questions raised by my hon. and gallant Friend, among which that of armaments stands out conspicuously. A modification is proposed by the introduction of quickfiring guns for the *Diadem* class of cruisers, and the question is whether, from the point of view of the duties the cruisers have to perform, it is better to have guns which will fire six times to the one fire of heavier guns. In action, which would my hon. and gallant Friend prefer, six shots from a 6in. gun or one discharge from a 9in. gun? We have not yet reached the point of having quick-firing 9in. guns; the highest quick-firing gun is a 6in. In considering this question of armament, the most important requirement is that the gun should do the duty required, and if a 6in. gun fired six times is sufficient to disable any ship with which a cruiser will have to deal, it is surely better to have that gun than a 9in. gun that will not do better work than a 6in. gun. It is, I admit, a matter of great importance. The armament to be given to these cruisers formed the subject of very extended discussion and conference before it was finally decided. My hon. and gallant Friend has alluded to the captain of the *Excellent;* but he will remember we have an Ordnance Committee, and that our Controller, Sir J. Fisher, has been in command of the *Excellent.* My hon. and gallant Friend's allusion to officials keeps out of view their naval character; but this question has been decided by naval men giving their best judgment to it, and whose sole business it is to consider this question of armaments from one year's end to another. Now, the alternatives considered were—an armament resembling that of the *Powerful* and *Terrible*, with 9·2in. bow and stern chase guns and 6in. broadside quickfirers; secondly, a similar broadside armament, but associated with 8in. bow and stern chasers; and, thirdly, a uniform armament of 6in. quick-firers. These were the alternatives, and the decision was for 6in. quick-firers. The ammunition is all of one kind; you have no separate reserve ammunition; your guns will be homogeneous, and you will have more protection for guns and crews. Then there is the safeguarding of the ammunition, to which great importance is attached. These are advantages which are not counterbalanced by omitting the heavier guns. Experience of quick-firers shows that, in power of attack as well as in accuracy and rapidity of fire, they are most powerful weapons against all cruisers and some battleships. These cruisers are not intended to fight battleships; but if they are able to meet any foreign cruisers with which they may be confronted, our object will be accomplished, and we believe that that is accomplished by this armament. As to the water-tube boilers, they have been a great success, and reflect the greatest credit on the Engineer-in-Chief, who has carried through this system against very great opposition. ["Hear, hear!"] The results have now been generally accepted.

CAPTAIN BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) asked what was the duration of the trials at full speed which the vessels with water-tube boilers had undergone?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: They have had three trials. The first was eight hours and the second was 30 hours at 18,000-horse power. That is at the normal sea-speed of the vessels, which is 21 knots. At 25,000-horse power the trial was for four hours, and at the end of that time they had worked up to 26,000-horse power, at which steam was blown off. The trials are admitted to show clearly the value of these boilers.

CAPTAIN BETHELL: Then 30 hours was the longest trial?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: Yes. These boilers have been submitted to greater trials than any others in the Navy. I have now dealt with most of the questions connected with the *matériel* of the fleet. Some other points will be raised as to the *personnel*, which I might deal with at a later stage of the evening. In conclusion, I wish to say that the criticisms so far, though dealing with a good many details, have been friendly to the Estimates, and that I thoroughly appreciate. As usual, both as regards *matériel* and *personnel*, it has been suggested that I have indulged in undue official optimism. I am not conscious of having done so, and I should be sorry if I had, for I am aware that we have not reached any ideal standard in either respect. We are in a period of transition, and we are labouring with very great difficulties, which prevent us from reaching so high a standard in many respects as we would wish. I am perfectly concious of all the shortcomings which still exist; but I can assure the Committee that my naval colleagues and myself will devote our best energies to dealing with these knotty points. [*Cheers.*]

*SIR C. DILKE said that the Committee was somewhat astonished that this year they had not had the First Lord's usual statement. There were many points which were not covered by the right hon. Gentleman's interesting and valuable speech of the other night, nor by the printed statement.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: Since the printed statement has been introduced it has been the custom not to make any further statement.

*SIR C. DILKE said that about a month ago he asked whether a statement would be made this year showing the amount expended in the year, both from taxation and from loans, on the Army and the Navy. A promise was made, but no such information had yet been given. The Committee could not have the least idea of what the expenditure on the Navy had been last year. They knew the amount of the Estimates and the Supplemental Estimates, but that was all. They did not know how much had been spent under the Naval Works Acts, 1895 and 1896. The Government had power to spend considerably over £3,000,000 under those two Acts alone. The First Lord had explained that the new ships were not to be described on this occasion, for reasons which were adequate. But the right hon. Gentleman had prepared the Committee for the prospect of these ships belonging to one of the classes at present in existence. There were signs in the Estimate which pointed to the extension of the *Canopus* class. The right hon. Gentleman said that the *Canopus* class "satisfied public opinion." After discussing that question with many competent persons, he was a little doubtful whether the right hon. Gentleman's statement could be accepted. There were serious objections to the thinness of the armour—6in. instead of 9in.—and the two very thin decks which had been introduced had been the subject of severe criticism. He had a high opinion of the present naval advisers of the Admiralty and of the constructors; but he thought it could hardly be said that the *Canopus* class satisfied public opinion. The right hon. Gentleman had alluded to the building of three third-class cruisers in the present year, and had defended the excellent *Pelorus* class to which they belonged. He wished to point out that another Power was building rapidly some large commerce destroyers which, according to the statement of the Minister of Marine, were specially directed against this country. He had heard it said that we were not replying to these ships because they were themselves only an answer to the *Powerful* and the *Terrible*. That was obviously a mistake; for these new ships were unprotected and quite unable to cope with the *Powerful* and *Terrible*.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): What is their speed?

*SIR C. DILKE said that he thought it was 23 knots. It was a disappointment to find that the only new cruisers were three of the third class. The right hon. Gentleman had defended his battleship programme against the criticism which had been made. The First Lord had said that four months' work could be acomplished on the battleships in the course of the next financial year. He understood these ships were to be built on slips at present occupied by ships which it was expected to launch in December, so he could hardly see how it was probable that four months' real work could conceivably be done on the ships in the present year, and the fact that only £40,000 odd was taken for one, and £50,000 odd for another confirmed his view that those ships belonged, not to the next financial year, but to the next financial year but one. The First Lord said one reason he could not build battleships faster was that the armour was not ready for them. There were, he said, only three firms who could supply the armour. The diminution in the programme in the present year was marked by a decline of 1,500 or 1,600 men employed in the dockyards. The First Lord had made a defence of this which was intended for the consumption of dockyard Members. But he was not a dockyard Member, and it was no answer to him to say these men were mostly to be got rid of by means of the ordinary wastage. He regretted that men were thrown out of employment, but there were important national considerations involved. With regard to the difficulty in getting armour, foreign countries like France, Germany, the United States and Belgium had relatively made greater progress in constructing armour during the last 20 years than had been made in England. That we could depend on three firms only, and that the production of those firms should not be adequate to the possible interests of the country, seemed a grave state of things. The three firms did not wholly depend on the Admiralty, but executed orders from abroad. We ought not to be dependent on three firms only unless those firms largely increased their plant. The distinct decline in our shipbuilding was not warranted by the present state of Europe. The First Lord gave an extraordinary reason last week for not making larger manning proposals. He used a curious phrase when he said we must have a reserve of ships as well as of men. There had been repeated discussion in books written by naval authorities, and discussions at the Royal United Service Institution, as to the necessity for a reserve of ships, and naval opinion undoubtedly admitted that there ought to be a reserve of ships. That had been accepted, and there had been a great deal of discussion as to what should be the extent of the reserve, what class of ships it should consist of, and where those ships should be stationed in time of war. But we had not sufficient complements of trained men for the ships of the reserve. What the First Lord seemed to mean when he spoke of a reserve of ships was that the ships existed and were in port. Circumstances might arise in which all our ships which were not obsolete would have to be sent to sea rapidly, and it was impossible to defend any shortness of men on the ground that there should be a reserve of ships in port when there were not for those ships sufficient crews of trained men. The First Lord had used another unfortunate phrase. He had said that after next year we should reach our maximum as regarded active service men. It might be wise to limit the total number of active service men, but it was a little unwise for the First Lord to commit himself to the definite statement that next year we should reach our maximum. How could the Admiralty really know unless they knew what the position of the other Powers would be? He admitted that a time might come when the Admiralty would be unable to keep on adding trained men, and would have to fall back on some other system. There was to be an increase of a thousand men of the Reserve, and a new system had been undertaken and the First Lord said it was impossible to predict whether it would be a failure or a success. To say we should reach the maximum of active service men the year after next, and to make only a tentative proposal with regard to Reserves, was to commit the Admiralty to a kind of promise to the House which would increase the difficulties of the First Lord himself or his successor in two years' time if he found he had to make other proposals than he had now told the Committee to expect. The First Lord had suggested that he was in favour of short service in the Navy. All he had done was to point out certain difficulties, and he had quoted Commander Honner's remarkable paper that had won the gold medal at the Royal United Service Institution. He pointed out that the Commander said just what he himself did about the difficulties, and that this had met with the approval of a large amount of naval opinion. The Admiralty had only a choice of evils before them. It was admitted that the long-service system could not be carried beyond a certain point, which would not give a sufficient number of men to man the Fleet. Then the Admiralty fell back on their tentative proposals, and if they were not a success they must look forward, whatever might be the difficulties, to the infusion of some short-service element. He hoped the short-service system might be avoided, but, unless there was a great increase in the active service list and success attended the new system of Reserves, it would be necessary to adopt in addition some form of short service for a fraction of the men. As far as the manning programme went he should like to ask how certain services were to be performed if the men who now performed them were to be sent to sea.

For instance, if the coastguard were sent to fill the battleships the pensioners would be the persons to take their place in the performance of coastguard duties. These duties were more important in time of war than at any other period, and if both their coastguard and their pensioners were to be sent to sea they would have to have new men to discharge their functions. The coastguard were the eyes and ears of the Admiralty; they could not do without them and they certainly could not send them to sea as well as the persons who were the most fitted to take their place. ["Hear, hear!"] As to the Reserve proposals, the First Lord virtually admitted that he hoped, perhaps, to rely less in the Reserves on the increase from the able merchant seamen class, and make up the Reserve from the fisherman class. The difficulty about the able merchant seamen was that if they went beyond a limited figure a number of mail steamers which ought to be running in time of war would be laid up, their men having been taken from them. Again, there were well-known difficulties about training the fishermen and employing them as had been suggested. A great deal of friction would arise between the regular seamen and the fishermen who were called out in this way. These difficulties existed in all systems which were partly made up by drafts from men of that description. There was another difficulty about fishermen reserves, which was that, if they pushed the figure beyond a certain point, they might be cutting off an important food supply of the country, which would be more necessary than ever in time of war. ["Hear, hear!"] The drift of his mind lay in the direction of the suggestions made by the hon. Member for King's Lynn, who made the best defence of the Admiralty and the present programme that he had heard. The hon. Member had dealt with the system of training, and pointed out the steps which might be taken towards improving the system which at present prevailed so as gradually to bring in a much larger trained element to their support. That was also the element which he should like to see strengthened. ["Hear, hear!"]

CAPTAIN PHILLPOTTS (Devon, Torquay) congratulated the First Lord of the Admiralty on his very satisfactory statement. He desired, he said, to call attention to one or two points which had exercised a considerable amount of attention among Naval men. The first of these to which he would refer related to the leave of officers, and especially sick leave. It would hardly be believed that if an officer was invalided from foreign service for disease contracted in that service, and came home, that though he might be received in a naval hospital, and under certain circumstances might be granted a month's leave on full pay, that was an exception. The rule was that if an officer was invalided from foreign service he was surveyed on arrival in England, and had to go and pick up his health on half-pay. That was, he thought, a manifest hardship, not to say injustice, to the officers of the Navy. Naval officers were not, as a rule, well off, and many of them were tempted to report themselves fit for service when they still ought to be on leave recovering their health. In respect to leave under other circumstances, he believed that no officer of or above the rank of Commander in the executive list got any leave at all on foreign service. He could not see why that should be. He thought officers—Commanders, Captains, and Flag officers—on their return from foreign service, were entitled to leave. It was true that no officer, no matter what his rank might be, got much leave, but those to whom he had referred to got none at all. He also alluded to the question of the harbour services, pointing out that many young lieutenants were selected for this work, which though harder than that on board a sea-going ship, actually penalised them, as they were considered to be on harbour and ot on sea service. As to the warrant fficers, they were very grateful for what had recently been done for them, but there were two points in regard to which they thought some further concessions might be made in their favour. The one was that of giving senior warrant officers superior rank, corresponding say to that of quarter-master or riding-master in the Army. Again it was felt that promotion to the rank of chief warrant officer was somewhat slow, and some relaxation of the present rule on this hand ought to be made. Then there was the further question of compassionate allowances to orphans of warrant officers, which he felt was deserving of consideration, as such allowances would often enable a widow to pay a premium for apprenticing her son to some good business. On the question of rations, it was a well-known fact that newly raised men, when they got over the first pangs of sea-sickness were much larger eaters than those who had been at sea for a time, and, in fact, so much was this the case that the new comers rapidly outgrew their clothes. [*Laughter.*] As a result, the older men were apt to suffer somewhat, and he thought some additions might be made to the rations of the men of the Fleet. He urged that cocoa should be served to the men in the night watches. It would cost very little, and though it was now issued under exceptional circumstances, it was not the rule. It was considered a great boon where it was served, and it was conducive to the health of the men. He did not agree with the senior Member for Portsmouth in desiring that petty officers and seamen should be put on the same footing as regarded pay and other conditions of service as the Marines and the Army. He did not for a moment say the conditions of service in the Navy were too favourable, but he should be sorry to see them assimilated to those of the Army. The grant of warrant rank to the senior engine room artificers would, no doubt, be appreciated by those officers, who well deserved the concession, the effect of which would be beneficially felt throughout the service. Whilst the coastguardsmen were pleased at the concession that had been made of a slight increase of pay to the chief boatsmen, they regretted that the other petty officers, and men of that force were still left out in the cold. They had for years petitioned for the twopence a day re-engagement money, and he hoped that this year their petition would meet with a favourable answer. He was glad to see that an Expert Committee was proposed to be appointed for dealing with the question of the training of their officers. The increase in the Royal Marines he warmly welcomed, though he should have wished to see the number raised to 20,000 men. He hoped the grievances felt by the stoppage of the rations of the Marines would be remedied. As regarded the reserves, he thought the new rules would have a most beneficial effect. He did think, however, that in some batteries the numbers would fall off, because, from the information he had received, he fancied a good many of the men, especially in the North of Scotland, would not be willing to embark for six months' training. He believed that by allowing the fishermen to qualify for the higher ranks they would get as large a number of men as they required. But there was another important source of supply. That was the body of men who left the service on the completion of their 10 years. He was sure that the offer of a pension, small though it was, at the age of 60 would induce those men to join the Reserve at the termination of their service. He had heard that the expenditure of coal in the boilers of the torpedo destroyers was 3lb. per horse power per hour. That was very high; but perhaps there were compensating advantages. In regard to construction, he thought that, after the statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty, no further information was required. The programme of construction was so drawn up that it would be worked on that gradually and slowly; and no First Lord of the Admiralty would be able to depart from it and allow the service to get into that state of weakness from which it was rescued 10 years ago.

Mr. WILLIAM ALLAN (Gateshead) expressed his gratification with the lucid and clear manner in which the First Lord of the Admiralty had made his statement. He approved of all that had been said by the right hon. Gentleman in regard to the increase that was about to take place in the Navy, and more especially the announcement of the right hon. Gentleman that cruisers were to be designed with the greatest possible similarity. The right hon. Gentleman had also said that two torpedo-boat destroyers were to be made to complete the number of 92. But he should like to know how many torpedo boats there were lying rusting in harbours or dockyards. Where were all the torpedo boats? He failed to see any provision in the Estimates for the maintenance of those torpedo boats. But he was glad to find by the Estimates that the advice he gave last year in regard to the necessity for increasing the salaries of chief engineers had been adopted by the Department. He regretted, however, that he saw no increase in the salaries of the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary to the Admiralty. He thought that, considering the great and important duties of the Admiralty and the amount of money it spent, that the Ministers in charge deserved higher salaries. But he was glad they were content with their salaries. He would not be were he in their place. [*Laughter.*] He would like to know how many reserve engineers the Admiralty had got. He could tell them that they had no reserve engineers at all. They had not got firemen even. The Department was advertising for firemen in all the provincial papers, and they could not get them. Why could they not get those men, who were the real heart of the vessel? Because they were not paid well enough, and did not get proper accommodation on board ship. One of his apprentices had passed the examinations and had gone as an engineer. The lad's father had to spend, even for his uniform, a sum of £70. That was not the way to encourage engineers to join the Navy. ["Hear, hear!"] He came now to a statement to which he took exception. They had been told by the First Lord of the Admiralty and by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Dundee, who represented a defunct Administration, that the water-tube boilers were a success. He denied that. He had said two years ago that to put those boilers into the *Powerful* and the *Terrible* was a mistake. It was said that there had been a trial trip; but it was a most unfair trial trip. All the coal was actually hand picked. The firemen were all picked firemen, and the engine rooms were crowded with artificers and workmen. There was not a firm in Great Britain that would say that was an honest trial. What was the consumption of coal? They were told that this was a great success, and they were satisfied with a 30 hours' run! Would any shipowner take a vessel costing three-quarters of a million after a trial of thirty hours? The consumption of coal was about 50 per cent. more than in an ordinary steamer. He would challenge them to run these two vessels across the Atlantic and back with every boiler at work and a normal complement of firemen and engineers and 1,500 tons of coal on board, which was the amount they were designed to carry. What an absurdity it was to call it a great success when a vessel had only been run four hours at full speed. He would like the Secretary to the Admiralty to say how many bent tubes had been taken out of the boilers already since they had been tried. Why were they fitting superheaters into the bottom of the chimneys and why did they lengthen the chimneys? He could tell them this, that these vessels became so heated between decks that they were lining them between decks with three inches of a preparation of copper, and the chimneys became red hot. Why did the chimneys flame at the top? Why did they want so many coals? Why did they not send the ships across the Atlantic? He would be quite willing to go on such a trial trip. If these ships did not go full speed when called upon they could not depend on them in war time. It would be better to design a ship for 18 knots than for 22 knots when they could not get that speed out of her. That was not engineering, and the trial was not a success. He was very much disappointed that these Estimates were incomplete and misleading. They did not give a true statement of the money that was spent in this country for ships. He wanted to know what had been the cost of the repair and maintenance of every ship in the Navy for the last twelve months. About two or three years ago there was at the end of the programme a statement giving the cost of repairs and maintenance of various ships, why was not that given in these Estimates? If they were not prepared to restore that table he would ask the Government to supply the House with a return of the cost of the repairs and maintenance for each torpedo destroyer. He wanted the House to know where the money went. He wished to know the amount of money which had been spent on training stokers in instruction vessels, and what had been spent on artificers and firemen. This information was of great value to him in his business, and he wanted to find it out. [*Laughter.*] These Estimates were very befogging, and were not got up with simplicity and exactitude. He went with the First Lord entirely in this expenditure, but he did not think the Government had got the best article for their money.

Mr. JOHN PENN (Lewisham) said he should associate himself with the hon. Member opposite on the question of the number of engineers we had in the Navy. The Secretary to the Admiralty had said the previous day, in answer to a question, that next year they proposed to add 30 more men, but from the First Lord's statement it appeared that in the next financial year there would be 66 extra ships, and he did not think that the addition of 30 men would go far to meet the requirements for these ships. He knew there was a strong opinion that in the event of an emergency or a war a large number of men could be obtained from outside by the offer of a bounty, but he very much feared that such men would not be able to discharge satisfactorily the duties which they would be called upon to undertake. In the event of such a case of emergency it would be very disastrous if they were short in the engine room or boiler room, and ships were constantly put out of action in consequence. There was another point on which they could not accept full service from the outside man. Coming from the Mercantile Marine, they would certainly have no acquaintance with the very large amount of auxiliary machinery that was found in men-of-war but was unknown in the Mercantile Marine. ["Hear, hear!"] The hon. Member for Gateshead went into the question of the water-tube boilers, and the trials of the *Powerful* and *Terrible*, and said that the Secretary of the Admiralty held a brief for the Admiralty in carrying out these trials. He felt he should have to defend himself for, for a very large number of years, he had carried out trials of very much the same kind. It was impossible for a contractor to undertake to get the large results he was called upon to get, unless he made every provision against accident. It anything went wrong below during the trial and he was responsible, he had to pay the money for a fresh trial. That was a very strong argument why he should take every precaution and care to run the ships through at the first time, and, therefore, he spared no expense to obtain that result. There was nothing abnormal in that. It had been the custom of the service ever since engineering was introduced, and there was nothing in it to justify the attack of the hon. Member for Gateshead. He thought, too, that the hon. Member was not sound when he said that the consumption of coal ran up to 50 per cent. higher in the case of the *Powerful* and the *Terrible* than it did in the ordinary steamer. The consumption as given in the engineering papers on the trials of these two ships was 1·83 in the case of the *Powerful*, and in the case of the *Terrible* 1·7. In the trials of a ship with which he had a great deal to do, and which corresponded much more in an ordinary way to a merchant steamer, the *Magnificent*, they burned 1·7. He did not think, therefore, that the charge of excessive consumption was borne out. He had been told by his hon. Friend the Member for Belfast, that the ordinary consumption in a run across the Atlantic was between 1·5 and 1·6. They did not differ very largely from the recorded results obtained in the *Powerful* and the *Terrible*. He hoped, too, that as experience was gained in the use of these boilers, the expenditure of coal would be reduced. He was borne out in that hope by the results of the progressive trials already made. He thought, too, that the hon. Member for Gateshead was not quite accurate in his reference to the super-heaters. The new, arrangement, he understood, was not a super-heater, but something in the nature of a feed-heater, an altogether different thing for the contrivances he described. That fresh arrangement was being fitted into a large number of ships, and the only question, as far as he knew, was whether it had had any sufficient trial, and whether its results would be as satisfactory as the Admiralty had every reason to hope. With regard to the fact that the Admiralty had raised the salary of the Engineer-in-Chief from £1,300 to £1,800, he very much regretted to see that this increase was to be made personal to the present holder. He said that because he considered the work the holder of the office, whether present or future, had to discharge was well worth all the £1,800 a year. ["Hear, hear!"] He did not know whether the success of the boilers in the *Powerful* and *Terrible* had anything to do with the recognition of the services of the Engineer-in-Chief, but he would venture to point out that it was scarcely a wise thing on the part of the Admiralty to give a large premium to what undoubtedly was heroic engineering, because they might be in the position of finding their engineering advisers so anxious to cut out a new departure, not only for the sake of the honour and glory but also for the loaves and fishes, that they might find some difficulty in restraining the ardour of those advising gentlemen at the Admiralty. He did not think the country need be anxious as to the failure of the boilers in the *Powerful* and *Terrible*, though he sincerely hoped the Admiralty would accept the challenge of the hon. Member for Gateshead and run the ships across the Atlantic at 18,500 indicated horse-power. He had not the slightest doubt that the ships would perform the run with credit, and that there would be no trouble with the boilers. He should also like, if such a run were undertaken, that the complements should be those which the ships would carry in ordinary service, because he had always held the opinion that on the long runs the complements in the engine-rooms were somewhat attenuated. If this experiment were carried out he was perfectly certain the results would be quite satisfactory.

MR. FORTESCUE FLANNERY (Yorkshire, Shipley) said he should like to associate himself with his hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham in his references to the somewhat exaggerated attack of the hon. Member for Gateshead. With reference to his allegation that in the trials of the water-tube boilers of the *Powerful* and *Terrible* there were picked coal, picked stokers, and other selected instrumentalities, he ventured to remind his hon. Friend opposite that that was done on the trial trips of all Her Majesty's ships, so that they might compare the performance of one ship with the performance of another at the same standard of perfection. In that respect the trial trips of the *Powerful* and the *Terrible* had been identically the same as those of every other of Her Majesty's ships. He went a considerable way with his hon. Friend the Member for Gateshead in regretting that the First Lord of the Admiralty should have so far committed himself as to refer to these water-tube boilers as a proved success upon comparatively short trial trips. It was not the custom for a trial trip of 30 hours to be regarded as absolutely decisive of the performance of new and comparatively experimental machinery, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would be able to accept the suggestion, which he cordially supported, that one of these vessels or both of them should be sent upon a lengthened sea voyage for the purpose of making quite sure that there was no mistake about their boilers or about the success which was promised by their present performances, and which, he believed, would be ultimately realised. As to the question that a great deal of expense had been incurred in modifications of these vessels, as alleged by the hon. Member for Gateshead, the Estimates showed that the original contract for the propelling machinery of the *Powerful* was £196,000, and that the actual cost was £201,000. That was a difference of £5,000, and that applied approximately to both the *Powerful* and the *Terrible*. So that if the hon. Member for Gateshead would furnish himself with the figures rather than with rhetoric, he thought it would be better for the discussion of these most important questions. [" Hear, hear! "] A point of great public interest had been named by the hon. Member for Dundee—that was the combination in the new Royal yacht of fighting qualities with the provision for her duty in conveying the Royal Family. It was the fact that Royal yachts belonging to foreign sovereigns had these fighting qualities, but anyone who had examined these vessels would have perceived that no amount of fighting quality had been obtained by the sacrifice of any of the accommodation, and that what amount of fighting quality remained after full accommodation for the Royal personages had been provided with just sufficient to justify the official statement to the people of the country. [" Hear, hear!"] He complimented the First Lord, when he had ascertained that such a combination was not practically possible or of any real value, on frankly telling the nation that fact, and that the vessel would be built for the intended purpose and that purpose alone. The distinguished feature of the Naval Estimates this year was the recognition of the comparative efficiency of the manning and officering of the Fleet. That was to say, they had proposed an increase of manning altogether larger than the progress in shipbuilding. That was necessarily the result of the larger amount of shipbuilding which had gone on during the last few years, because while they could construct a battleship in three years, they could not train even the humblest man or officer in much less than twice that time to make him efficient. It was perfectly clear that more prevision and more foresight were necessary in connection with manning than with building, and he ventured to say that the step taken by the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues was one that ought to have the sympathy and support of everyone who took an interest in naval affairs. Since the introduction of these Estimates the Minister of Marine of a foreign Power had declared that that Power would no longer be content to be one of the first military Powers in the world, but that she must now become one of those who held the balance of power in naval affairs in Europe. That statement probably did not take their Admiralty by surprise, though it was new to the people of this country. If it had had any effect at all the effect had been to consolidate and crystallise public opinion in support of the great truth which was now so wisely recognised that the Navy of this country must be absolutely paramount, without any doubt or suspicions, or even room for discussion. [" Hear, hear !"] It was almost new to the engineers to find approval of improvements in rank coming from executive officers. The bestowal of warrant rank upon the engine room artificers removed practically the whole of the grievances upon which those men had dwelt now for a considerable time. No one could deny that every year the responsibilities of the engineer branch of the Navy increased. The statistics which were given last year by his hon. friend the Member for Lewisham (Mr. Penn), showing the great increase in horse-power under the charge of each individual engineer of the Navy, had not been continued, he was sorry to say, in the same form this year. The figures as to horse-power in the Navy which he had taken out were something like these. In 1883 there was in the Navy about 500,000 of indicated horse-power; in 1892, that was to say nine years later, there was 1,500,000 of indicated horse-power; and at the present time there was about 2,500,000 of indicated horse-power. That was to say that in 14 years we had increased the indicated horse-power by something like five times. Not only was there that increase in regard to propelling machinery, but there was the steam, hydraulic, and electrical machinery throughout the ship also under the charge of the engineer. Why, the big guns and the small guns to which reference had been made were under the mechanical charge of the chief engineer. That officer had become every year more and more important, and more and more indispensable to the good of the Navy. He did not put forward the claims of the engineers simply on the grounds of justice and philanthrophy, but ventured to say that any defect in the skilfulness and in the numbers of the engineers afloat would form one of the most vital dangers to the Navy that it was possible we could encounter. At the present time there was a considerable amount of discontent on the part of the engineer officers of the Navy. They were doing their duty loyally, but their discontent arose not so much from a feeling that their pay was not as it ought to be, but from a feeling that they had not the relative rank and position in regard to executive officers that they ought to have. Why, the chief engineer of a ship had charge of something like one-third of the vessel's complement; in some ships of more than that proportion. The men under the chief engineer were trained to take their places in fighting, but the engineer himself had no such training. He was given a sword and a commission, but no part of his official duty was to learn how to use the sword, or to do honour to his commission by taking part in actual fighting. That was more than a sentimental grievance, for it produced a lack of respect on the part of the large number of men whom he had to control. The engineer of the ship had no power to administer even the slightest punishment. He must go like a schoolboy telling tales to the commanding officer of the ship, and must complain that so and so under his charge was doing something of which he did not approve. The effect of that system was that the men did not respect the engineer as he ought to be respected. The engineers felt strongly that at some critical moment this state of things might constitute a national danger. What he respectfully suggested to the right hon. Gentleman was that the position of the engineer officers should be ameliorated in much the same manner as the position of the Marine officers was improved. The Marine officer could administer minor punishment without necessarily referring to the commanding officer. That amount of power given to him was sufficient to enable him to maintain ordinary discipline, and to make secure his position and authority in relation to his men. If such power were given to the engineer officers, and if executive rank were conferred upon them, there would accrue great advantage to the Service, as their position would be improved and they would be able to maintain proper discipline in the engine room. A few years ago there were no Royal Engineers. There were, it was true, a body of civilians attached to the Army known as sappers and miners. Their position was improved. They were made into a body known as Royal Engineers, and the officers were given the same relative rank as officers in other branches of the Army. The result was that we had a splendid body of men, as scientific and as practical as they were whilst they were civilians, and who, having military position, were able to take their duty along with the rest of the Army in a thoroughly efficient manner. What he pleaded for was that the engineers of the Navy should be treated in the same manner as the sappers and miners of the Army were treated, by being organised in military fashion, their officers receiving executive rank. If that be done he believed that the difficulties which existed in finding a sufficient number of engineer officers for the Navy would gradually disappear. We had not enough engineer officers, and a very large number of those we had were juniors. There were many in charge of machinery afloat who were exceedingly young and inexperienced, and notwithstanding that there was a stagnation as regarded promotion, because the policy of the Admiralty had been to place a junior engineer in a position of responsibility and authority, but not to promote him to the relative rank that such a duty would ordinarily require. When an executive officer was placed in command of a torpedo-boat destroyer he received the rank of acting comander, and he had an increase of pay, and his time counted accordingly; but if a junior engineer were placed in charge of the machinery of a torpedo-boat destroyer he did not get the acting rank, and his time did not count. These were grievances which the engineers felt might be removed. He believed the right hon. Gentleman would admit there was a difficulty in obtaining sufficient engineers to complete the complement of the ships now in commission. With regard to the Royal Naval Reserve, he asked if there was no prospect of engineer officers for the Royal Naval Reserve having training at sea? Was there really any reason why what had been done as regards seamen officers should not be done as regards the engineer officers of the Royal Naval Reserve? Why was it that engineer officers were to have instruction at home ports and not the opportunity of being sent to sea in Her Majesty's ships for the purpose of training? The fact was that there was a Board of Admiralty that was clinging to the traditions of the old days of the sailing ship. There was no representative on the Board of Admiralty of the engineer branch or of modern science as applied to mechanism, and it was a matter of great praise to the present political officials of the Admiralty that they had been able to override the prejudice which the system necessarily produced and been able to introduce such reforms as they had made, and he hoped they would go in the same direction.

*Mr. HUDSON KEARLEY (Devonport) observed that the increased rapidity with which ships were now being built in Government dockyards raised a very important point as regards *personnel*; and that was the greater demand on the resources for manning the ships. He should be glad of information as to whether they were unduly sanguine in supposing that it would be possible to put these battleships into commission within 18 months from the laying down of the keel. If such were possible, an increased entry of men would be imperative. He wished to know the number of engine-room artificers to whom it was proposed to give warrant rank; further, what difference the acceptance of this rank would make to the servitude of engine-room artificers; and, finally, how was it proposed to select those men? The feeling of the men was that they would sooner secure the position by examination than by capricious selection. One disqualification which Marine officers felt very much was their inability to sit on Naval Courts Martial when afloat, although they could do so on Courts Martial ashore. Already there had been a definite promise given by an ex-First Lord, the present Secretary of State for India, to remedy this disability. In 1891 the question was raised by Sir John Pope Hennessey, and the present Secretary of State to India replied:—

> "A good many naval officers object to the proposed change, but I, personally, cannot see why the change should not be made, and I will undertake to consider the matter and propose an Amendment to the Naval Discipline Act with the object of carrying it out."

Yet nothing had been done. His hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Eastbourne had called attention to the treatment of the Marines in regard to rations. These men, in the first place, were badly paid, and if they had to rely on the rations provided by the Admiralty, they would be almost half-starved. It became a greater hardship when they had to pay for them. For the rations supplied to them they had to pay 7d. a day out of a pay of 8s. 9d. a week. There were, in addition, perpetual stoppages for clothes. He raised the question last year, and the First Lord said that it was under consideration, and that he would give a decision later on. He raised his voice year after year against mulcting these men. There were other similar anomalies, but he did not propose to discuss them in detail; there was, however, the case of the married Marines, whose wives suffered considerable hardship when their husbands embarked. Directly the Marine embarked his ration and lodging money stopped, and all that could be allowed his wife was a miserable sum of 25s. a month. The result was that the sweating tailors took advantage of the condition of these women. Separation allowance ought to be made for married men. They recognised separation allowance on shore, but as soon as the Marine embarked the Admiralty seemed to acquit themselves of what becomes of the man's wife and family. Then on board, though able to take his share in working a gun with the bluejacket, the advantage enjoyed by the latter was not given to the Marine. That was a hardship, and it was felt to be one. So long as the Marine was on board of the ships, so long as he worked the guns, he ought to have open to him all the advantages which were open to the bluejacket. He hoped these questions as to pay and separate allowances would receive the consideration they deserved.

THE EARL OF DALKEITH (Roxburgh) thought that anyone who looked impartially into the Naval Programme this year would feel a large amount of satisfaction with it. He confessed with regard to the programme for new construction he was disappointed. It was a policy some years ago to have a large number of ships building, but it was of very little use to the country to have a large number of ships a very long time in the hands of the constructors. The building of these ships must become more costly to the country every year. They had increased the number of ships in commission, and he considered the money well spent. He was in favour of training the men into a state of efficiency. However, they might feel assured, from the statement of the First Lord, that in the event of any foreign Power laying down a large number of ships, endangering our supremacy, he should not hesitate to demand supplementary Estimates. He was grateful as to the new yacht. He was very pleased to hear the First Lord's references to the training ships. It was a great hardship upon naval officers that after three years' service on foreign stations they were only entitled to six weeks' leave. He trusted that greater power would be given to the Admiralty to grant additional leave to naval officers who had been serving at unhealthy stations. ["Hear, hear!"]

On the return of the CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS, after the usual interval,

MR. EDWARD MORTON (Devonport) observed that in the explanation that had been submitted to the Committee by the Admiralty, it was stated that, while the numbers coming forward for most of the ratings had been very satisfactory, some difficulty had been experienced in maintaining the necessary number of engine-room artificers and artisans. The statement announced also that a grade of engineer officers of warrant rank had been established as an encouragement to engine-room artificers who had rendered meritorious services, and as a step which was desirable in order that the growing requirements of the Fleet might be met. He knew that for six years at least the engine-room artificers had been demanding warrant rank. It was only when it had become a pressing necessity of the interests of the service that they had succeeded in getting it. The demand was made by the warrant officers for a rank similar to the quartermaster rank in the Army—a rank of promotion by which they might succeed in getting a commissioned rank. They maintained that a great number of men who left the service at the end of the first ten years' service was an abnormally large one, and it was so large owing to the fact that there was no career under the present arrangements offered to men in the Navy. According to the last Return, issued in 1892 or 1893, covering, he believed, five years, it was shown that almost exactly, year by year, one-third of the men who were entitled to leave at the end of ten years' service did so. It was obvious that the second ten years of the lives of seamen were more valuable to the nation than the first ten years. It should also be borne in mind that it cost the nation about £300 to make an able seaman; therefore, the initial cost was largely lost if a man left the service at the end of the first ten years. He should like to see something done whereby they could induce men to re-engage for a second term of ten years who would not otherwise re-engage. By this means they would save half the initial cost in making him a seaman. It had been estimated by the Admiralty that the cost of these demands for line promotion analogous to that of quartermaster rank was about £3,000 a year. According to the last Return the number of men leaving at the end of the first ten years was 1,200 men a year. If they could induce 30 of these men to go on for a second term a saving of £150 each would be effected, or the whole amount of money which would be involved in creating this new line of promotion. Could the Admiralty say whether the figures of the last Return were at all altered? Was the proportion less than 33 per cent. of the total number of men who had a chance of leaving, or was that state of things remedied? That was the crux of the whole matter. Ten years ago there was an agitation in the United States to start a training ship for boys in the American Navy. The Secretary stated that there was no need for a training ship, because they could get the best material in the world out of the men who had joined and trained under the British Navy, and who had left the service after their first ten years. Had any alteration taken place in the proportion of men who left at the end of the first ten years? This demand on the part of the warrant officers had existed for many years, and it had not been opposed by naval Members of the House; yet for some reason or other the Admiralty had not granted it. What was the reason which prevented the Admiralty from giving this line promotion, to which they thought the warrant officers in the Navy were entitled? It would not only affect the warrant officers in the Navy but it would quicken all the ratings below the warrant rank, and it would offer a career to which they considered that they were entitled, while at the same time putting a stop to this wasteful leakage of men trained at the expense of the taxpayers.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said this was an old question, but he submitted that the suggestion made by the warrant officers was not one for their good. What was proposed was that they should retain the lower-deck status, and have quarter-deck pay. Special rank was in his opinion out of place, and he was convinced that in making this demand a few warrant officers had gone off the line. There was a grievance of the warrant officer which was easily remedied. At present there was between the lower deck and the quarter-deck a watertight door. That door could only be opened by the Lords of the Admiralty themselves on condition that the warrant officer had performed some service of exceptional gallantry in action. That was a question of accident, and his proposal was that the watertight door should be broken down, and that the Lords of the Admiralty should have power to promote any officer to quarter-deck rank for any excellence, even other than that of gallantry. Nor would he fight the battle of engineers who wanted to leave their most important and vital duties, in order to look out for the ship, who wanted to navigate a ship without knowledge of navigation, and fight a ship without knowledge of guns. They wanted executive power, and that meant, he supposed, to stand on the bridge. In his opinion engineer officers had all they were entitled to have, even in social consideration and gold lace. The task of an engineer officer was a most important one, and he should be content to keep to it and not assume to undertake duties for which by training and knowledge he was in no way fitted. Let executive officers do the executive duty and engineers the engineers' duty. He was as anxious as anyone that engineers should have their proper recognition, and he believed that at this moment they had this recognition. The right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean made some remarks complimentary to him which he was afraid he did not deserve, for undertaking the defence of the Treasury Bench; for he had not done it of set purpose. If the Front Bench came within any truths he might have stated it was probably by inadvertence, and he was glad if he had had that good fortune; but certainly he never set out to defend the Front Bench. One other remark of the right hon. Baronet had reference to the reserve of ships, that they were not adequate, and never would be, and that the reserve of men engineers to man those reserves was insufficient. In that the right hon. Gentleman was mistaken. He meant, it was to be supposed, the immediate reserve and the men to man those ships. We have at the present time in the Reserve some of the latest and some of the best ships we possess. As a matter of fact, there would be found navies in rows in some of our ports. For instance, at Plymouth and Portsmouth there might be seen the latest things in ships lying in rows ready to go to sea; and that they were ready was amply proved by the experience of the Flying Squadron. That squadron was fitted out for sea, and included some of our best ships, in six days, one of the days being Sunday, showing that, at that time, we had the ships and the men to man them. Whether the Reserve ought to be increased was another matter. Then he turned to the most important question—the *personnel*. Of the number of men on the active list—100,050, of whom 62,000 were seamen—he did not complain. It was adequate, if the men were the men they ought to be, and had the training they ought to have; and he thought the system that maintained that proportion between the number of men and the number of vessels we were likely to have would be a proper one, providing—and it was a large proviso—the men got their proper training, which he believed they did not get. But even if the men were adequate for all the requirements, they were still subjected to what he could not but think was a most lamentable misuse under the present system. We had at that moment in Africa a large number of sailors on land, marching through swamps and jungles, and doing not sailors', but soldiers', duty. Now, a sailor was a highly-trained man, and cost to himself a great deal of time and to the country a great deal of money. He was trained to a special task, which nobody else could perform; and if that man were taken from his proper task which he was trained to perform an injury was inflicted on that trained man, and a greater injury was done to the public service by putting him to an inferior duty. The sailors who were doing soldiers' duty amid the swamps and jungles of the Bight of Benin were an illustration of the system. Their employment in that way would disorganise and ruin the squadron to which they were attached. That was present to the mind of every naval officer. However large the number of their men, if they continued to misuse them for purposes for which they were not appropriate, for which they were not entered, for which they were much too valuable, and for which an inferior man in training would do equally well, they largely decreased the number available. To the Naval Reserve he attached the greatest importance, and he confessed that he looked with the greatest misgiving at the proposal of the First Lord, which, he was afraid, would result in a serious disappointment and a diminution in the number of the effective Naval Reserve. There were two classes, the first and second Naval Reserve, and the First Lord proposed to keep the divisions, but to change their names, the lower being the "seamen" class, and the upper the "qualified seamen" class. Now, what had produced the success of the Naval Reserve? That seamen had been able to join the Reserve, and to do a comparatively short period of training every year without interfering with their ordinary methods of earning their livelihood. To that was added the charm of a possible prospect of a fight; and so a man was induced to join the Reserve, and undertake an engagement, which he was sure every man would be ready to fulfil, in the grand and solemn event of war, to go straight into the Navy, there to finish his career. That had been the inducement to join the Naval Reserve. But the proposal of the First Lord seemed to him to entirely alter the conditions of service, for he proposed that a man joining the lower or seamen class shall be forced to spend six months of his first year's service at sea.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: No, that is not so. During the first term of service.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES said that was a very different thing, and that being so, his objection did not apply. The statement was:—

> "Men enrolled in the 'seamen class' will be entered under the same conditions as to age and service, and with the same rate of pay and allowances as the present second-class men. They will be called upon within their first term of enrolment to enter upon a period of six months training in the Royal Navy."

He now understood that the six months' training must be within the first five years, and might be in the fifth year. He had no objection to that proposal. If the proposal had been to serve six months at sea in the first year it would have knocked the Reserve on the head at once. He was relieved to have elicited that it was not six months at sea in the first year of service, but during the five years; that arrangement had some chance of succeeding. Then he turned to the consideration of the resources upon which the Admiralty could draw for its supply of men for the Navy. He had quoted figures the other day, and, as to these, doubts were expressed at the time to an extent that bred a certain amount of doubt in his own mind as to the accuracy of the figures. He had not stated them with great certitude, because they were Board of Trade figures, and, except a woman, he knew nothing more uncertain than Board of Trade statistics. But he had found that, when that Department compiled figures for one purpose he was pretty safe if he used them for another purpose; they made statistics for all purposes, and, like the pieman in "Pickwick," flavoured them according to the taste of the market. As the figures were not furnished for the purposes of a Naval Debate, he had thought they might be used for the purpose; and, since their accuracy had been challenged, he had made specific inquiries of the Board of Trade, and found that he was practically right, but that he had not made a relatively small deduction in the number of men available. The Mercantile Marine contained 240,000 men, and of these 21,000—and this was the deduction—were fishermen, so that, in round figures, the net number in the Mercantile Marine was 220,000; to this add the number of fishermen, 114,000, and the Navy, including pensioners but not including the Reserve, 106,000, and the total was 440,000 men in the Mercantile Marine, fishermen, and in the Navy, and nobody told twice over.

MR. J. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesbrough) asked where these figures were taken from.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES said they were taken from the last annual Return of Navigation and Shipping for the year 1895, and dated April 1896, pages 266 and 285. So, adding to this figure of 440,000, based on this Board of Trade Return, classes which were not included—beachmen, yachtsmen, bargemen, crews of vessels permanently abroad, and others engaged in river navigation—it was not too much to say that the water-going, seafaring, web-footed population of the country was not less than half-a-million, and of these only 32,000 were not British subjects, not more than 6 or 7 per cent. of the whole, Lascars being counted as British subjects. This was a large and very sufficient mass upon which, on occasion and under proper conditions, the Admiralty could draw for naval services.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE remarked that the Navy was included in this estimate.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES, to make his meaning clear, repeated the figures making up the total of 440,000. There was a total population, of which the Navy formed a part, of nearly half-a-million men, upon which the Admiralty could draw. Then he came to a very serious, he would not say charge, but suggestion of a mistake, on the part of the Board of Admiralty. The charge he made was this: that the present Admiralty had shown, and was showing, a very dangerous tendency to rely upon ships and upon guns rather than upon qualified men. It had shown a desire to rely not merely on ships and guns, but upon bricks and mortar, stones and mud. It pinned itself to the instrument too much without thinking of the hand by which alone the instrument could be worked, and reverted to the practice of all the enemies whom we had always beaten at sea. This was the error of the Spanish Armada. Their ships, guns, and appliances were perfect; it was their men who were wanting in training. This was the error of the French in the last war. Their ships were so good that we never had a good one unless it was taken from the French. Their guns were admirable, their methods of mobilisation were perfect, but their men were deficient in training. It seemed to him that the right hon. Gentleman and the Admiralty of the present day had departed and were departing from the old, sound, practical traditions of looking rather to the man who was in the ship and behind the gun than looking to the ship or the gun itself. He was afraid this rested upon another error, namely, that we were indulging in this tendency because the foreigner did it. There was scarcely a mistake made in modern times in the British Navy which had not been made because we had chosen to run after the example of the foreigner. Was the foreigner to teach us any thing about the sea? We could teach him a good deal, and in this matter we ought to rely upon our own traditions and knowledge and work out our own Navy in our own way. It had not been so. Because the foreigner had a big gun we took a big gun, and we only now had tardily recognised that it was a failure. Because the foreigner had a big ship we must have a big ship. But we could not copy the foreigner. The foreigner's position was undoubtedly different from ours. The ship the foreigner required was different; the service performed was different, and he only alluded to these examples because it seemed to him that in this respect we were exaggerating the importance of the ship and the gun and the instrument generally, and in depreciating the importance of the hand to use them, we must in this respect be following the foreigner. He could conceive no other excuse for it [The First Lord of the Admiralty: "No, no!"] To sum up his indictment, what he said was that the Admiralty of the present day was relatively, to a large extent, neglecting the training of the men, which seemed to him infinitely more important. They had shortened the training at both ends. They took the boy in later and finished his training earlier, and put him down on the Fleet as a finished article whereas his training had scarcely begun. Formerly a boy was 20 months on a training ship, but the right hon. Gentleman last year reduced the period to 16 months. In addition to that the Admiralty had invented a system of sending a cruiser like the *Northampton*—to which were to be added two more—round the coasts of the country to take boys at a greater age, thus further shortening the period at this end. These vessels were to be those on which the boys were trained, not for 20 months or even 16, but for 6 months. They took the boy later, gave him less training, and turned him into the Navy as though he were equally as good as the boy who had had 20 months' training. That was a grave and serious mistake, and it was not the only one. From the training ship the boy went to the training brig, where he learned the practical part of his profession. But he was only left there six short weeks, whereas he should be left there at least thirteen weeks. Coming to the training squadron, he admitted that the training the officers and men got was admirable, but there was not one in ten of the seaman class able to get that training, for the simple reason that there were not ships enough in the training squadron to take the men who required to have training. He was not one of those who thought there should be nothing but seamen in the Royal Navy. He believed that the seamen they were to have were required to be as good seamen as ever they were, and perhaps better, because they were fewer—but he did not think they required so many in the ship and they might have a large infusion of red marines and blue marines for working the guns and doing a good deal of the work which was done in the old ships by the seamen class. But that did not affect what he was saying as to the training of the seamen class. They must have them for their ordinary seamen's duties. He came now to the training of the officers, and he considered it a great mistake that the first training should not be conducted on board ship where the young officer, while yet a boy, might learn the habits of ship life. He believed, however, the college had been decided upon. He reproached the First Lord with having raised the age of the boys joining the *Britannia* by one year. They were now to join a year older, and as they were to be lieutenants at the same age as heretofore, they would get a year's less training, although the former period, instead of being too long, was really too short. Instead of passing 23 months on the *Britannia*, they would now spend 16 there. That was a serious infringement on the time passed in the necessary preparation for the active duties of sea life. The right hon. Gentleman had said that the raising of the age had been adopted in order to get boys from the public schools. They could take no worse boy for an officer in the Navy than a boy from a public school. When a boy was brought into the Navy, from the age of 13 to 19 he experienced an entire absence of privacy, which a boy who was older and had been indulged in the luxury of a public school for a year before he had entered the Navy could never break himself into. He would rebel against all absence of privacy, and in no long time would endeavour to leave the Navy. Another reason which had been given for the change was that it would destroy the nefarious work of the crammers. The examination was to be altered and the standard raised because the age was raised. But if they took a boy a year later, what would happen would be that they would give the crammer an additional year in order to put an additional year's cramming into the boy, and they would find the public schools would not be prepared to take a boy for a year or two who would then leave them. The headmasters of public schools stated that it was impossible for them to receive boys who shortly after admission would leave them. The two months' training at Greenwich was also too short. When cadets were admitted a year older and their period of training shortened, how could it be pretended that they were sent into the Navy efficient officers? He regarded it with the greatest misgiving. It was no answer to say these cadets were to be put into torpedo boats or sent to sea in sea-going ships. Unless a man had received previous training he did not understand what he saw on board ship. Seamanship did not come to a man like the smallpox. [*Laughter.*] It reminded him of the story of the man who, when asked if he could play the fiddle, replied, "Get me one and I'll see." [*Renewed laughter.*] Ships and guns were the mere creatures of men, and however good they were in themselves, they were useless unless men were trained to use them well.

*MR. MACARTNEY, replying on the discussion, said the hon. Member for Lynn Regis had referred to the raising of the age for the admission of cadets for the Navy. In future, the course of study on the *Britannia* would be more closely and entirely devoted to purely naval education. The Admiralty had taken the best advice on the subject. Their action had the approval, not only of Naval officers, but the general assent of the Navy, and they were assured that the best results would attend the alteration they had made. When his hon. Friend said the boy from a public school was the worst recruit for the Navy, he must remind him that, in modern times, from Eton, at all events—and from other public schools which might be named—Admiral Sir George Tryon, one of the most distinguished Naval officers this century had produced, the captain of the *Vernon*, the captain of the *Britannia*, and other distinguished Naval officers had gone straight into the Navy. With regard to the Greenwich course, personally he sympathised with a good deal that his hon. Friend had said. But the Admiralty had appointed a Committee to inquire not only into the Greenwich course, but the subsequent examinations and course of education of Naval officers, and the points he had raised would be fully considered by that Committee, and the Admiralty would give close attention to the evidence and any recommendations the Committee might make. His hon. Friend seemed to be under the impression that the Admiralty had gone abroad for their models and relied more on guns and ships than on the *personnel* of the Navy. But they studied first the efficiency of the Navy, regardless of what might be done by any other navy or any other country. His hon. Friend had alluded to the training of boys in the Navy. He did not set his opinion against that of his hon. Friend, but the Committee should understand that on the question of the training of boys and officers, both in the training squadron and brigs, there was a considerable difference of opinion among officers in the Navy, and he was quite within the mark when he said that a large proportion of the opinion, certainly of the present generation of naval officers, was not in favour of the views his hon. Friend had expressed. They preferred that the training of seamen and young Naval officers should take place on what they believed to be the typical vessel of the future—namely, the destroyer. Of course that was founded on the supposition that in future the *personnel* would rather be that of a seaman gunner than that of a seaman of the old description. They had received the most favourable reports as to the boys entered on the *Northampton* from the officers of all the ships among which they had been distributed. As to the percentage of loss on re-engagement, there had been a considerable diminution, and they had no reason to believe that that loss was in any way owing to the question of what were the prospects of the warrant officers in the Navy.

Mr. KEARLEY asked whether the hon. Gentleman could state the difference of percentage between stokers and seamen.

*Mr. MACARTNEY said there was no difficulty about the supply of stokers either on the first entry or on re-engagement. Generally speaking, the diminution of those who did not re-engage was most reassuring. As to the artificer engineers, they would be in the same position as the warrant officers. The questions relating to their promotion had not yet been definitely settled. As the result of specific inquiries, he was able to state that the Marines had no grievance in regard to the supply of boots. He was assured of that by the responsible authorities. It was true that there was a distinction between the Army and the Marines in regard to separation money, but the Marine was in a very different position to the soldier, and was not liable to be shifted all over the country from one barrack to another. If he could see his way, however, to make the allowance to the Marines which was made in the Army, he should be very glad to do so, but he must reserve his judgment on that point until he had further considered the matter. The hon. Member for Devonport also complained that naval shipwrights were not placed on an equality in regard to position with the engine-room artificers. It was not correct to say that both classes passed the same examination.

Mr. KEARLEY: What I said was that when shipwrights were in the civil employment of the Government in the yards they passed the same Civil Service Examination as the fitters.

*Mr. MACARTNEY said that the naval shipwrights were entered either from among the naval apprentices in the Government yards, or they were entered from the outside, and there was no comparison between a naval shipwright and a shipwright on shore. In the shops at Devonport, shipwright apprentices and engine-room artificers worked side by side.

Mr. KEARLEY: That is an entire mistake. They do not work in the same shop.

*Mr. MACARTNEY said they might not work all their time together. The shipwright apprentices were required to pass an entirely different examination from the examination of the engine-room artificers; and he could not admit that there could be in fairness any comparison made between the two classes of men. Again, the prospect of advancement held out to naval shipwrights was not so poor as had been presented to the Committee by the hon. Gentleman. There were about 319 naval shipwrights on board Her Majesty's ships, and they had opportunities of rising to the rank of warrant officer, which was held by 207 different individuals. He also denied that there was anything menial, as it had been called, in the character of the work the shipwrights had to perform. The hon. Member also complained that the number of stokers had fallen off, and that the physique of the men was inferior.

Mr. KEARLEY: I made no statement as to the insufficiency of the numbers. I said the quality was bad.

*Mr. MACARTNEY said the hon. Gentleman was misinformed. The hon. Gentleman had also said that the stokers inspected by the First Lord of the Admiralty had been selected for the purpose. That was a mistake. His right hon. Friend and he had seen 690 stokers, and most of these were not of the first class but of the second class. He assured his hon. Friend there was nothing in the physique of the stokers to be dissatisfied with. The hon. Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Havelock Wilson) had said Her Majesty's ships were insufficiently victualled, and that in consequence it was impossible for us to get a sufficient number of men to enter the service. The hon. Member had displayed a great amount of ignorance on the subject. The ship in the service was victualled upon salt beef and pork when fresh provisions could be got. The hon. Member said that the men of the Navy were obliged to spend a large proportion of their wages in supplying themselves with food. The hon. Member might be surprised to learn that the privilege of taking up their savings was one of the highest-prized privileges of the bluejacket, and that the amount of the savings was increasing every year. If the bluejacket chose to spend his savings in provisions not supplied according to regulation, he was at perfect liberty to do so. He did not think the hon. Member would get any crew to agree with his criticisms, which he had based on a complete misapprehension of the system of victualling the service.

Mr. HAVELOCK WILSON: I have been in the service, and do know a little about it.

*Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. Member must have forgotten everything about it.

Mr. HAVELOCK WILSON: From your point of view.

*Mr. MACARTNEY did not know what ship the hon. Member was in; he would be glad to be informed.

Mr. HAVELOCK WILSON: I will tell you later on.

*Mr. MACARTNEY said the hon. Member for the Shipley Division of Yorkshire (Mr. Flannery), was under a misconception of the power of engineer officers with regard to inflicting punishment. The hon. Gentleman seemed to think they were in an unfair position as compared with Marine officers. [Mr. Flannery: "Minor punishment."] But that power of Marine officers was strictly confined to matters which arose on inspection. The Marine officer had no power to deal with an offence against general discipline, but when one was committed he must, like all other officers on board ship, go to the commanding officer of the ship. Nor was the hon. Gentleman right as to the executive officer in command of a destroyer. The executive officer was not given any increased rank. The hon. Member for Lewisham (Mr. Penn) had expressed a doubt whether in the event of war the engineers of the Mercantile Marine would be competent to do what was required of them in the engine rooms of Her Majesty's ships. It was not proposed by the Board of Admiralty, and it did not enter into their calculations for the manning of the ships, that these officers should be put in a position of great responsibility in any of the new class of ships. His hon. Friend the Member for Gateshead (Mr. Allan) returned to his charge in respect to the water-tube boilers. He would not go at length into the question, but there were one or two points which the hon. Gentleman placed before the Committee which he must notice. The hon. Member for Gateshead, in his criticism of the water-tube boilers, had assumed that the trial trips of the *Powerful* and *Terrible* took place under conditions which were peculiar to the ships of the Royal Navy, and were not shared by ships of the Mercantile Marine. He wished to say emphatically that neither the *Powerful* nor *Terrible*, nor any other ship in the Navy, was submitted to trials except under conditions which were shared by every ship in the Mercantile Marine, where trials for high speed were insisted upon in the case of ships taken over from shipbuilders. The conditions of skilled stokers and picked coal were regarded as of the utmost importance, both by the shipbuilders and the Admiralty. It would not be fair to test the boilers or the engines with inefficient stokers and inefficient materials. ["Hear, hear!"] The hon. Member for Gateshead also spoke of the stupendous alterations which were carried out in the dockyards after they had taken over the ships. The stupendous work in alterations with regard to the *Powerful* and the *Terrible* was practically very small. This was a fact which was well known to every Member of the Committee. Every farthing spent not only in relation to the *Powerful* and *Terrible*, but also in relation to every ship taken over by the Admiralty from the contractors, was to be found set out in the Dockyard Expense Accounts. The hon. Member also asked why they had put in super-heaters, and what good did they derive from them? As a matter of fact they had not put in super-heaters in either the *Powerful* or *Terrible*, nor had they put in feed-heaters, as was suggested by his hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham. The hon. Member for Gateshead also asked how many tubes were taken out of the *Powerful* or *Terrible*. So far as his knowledge went, and the knowledge of the officials of the Admiralty who were specially responsible for the boilers, not a single tube was taken out. His hon. Friend the Member for Torquay raised the question of officers generally, and of invalided officers especially. He could assure his hon. and gallant Friend that this was a question which had always had, at least in his experience, the sympathetic attention of the Board of Admiralty, and would continue to receive their sympathetic attention in the coming years. With regard to the coastguard, he was afraid he could only say that the coastguard was such a popular body that there did not appear any reason for holding out any further inducements to men to join; they had simply to select from amongst the multitude of candidates. It was true that there was a difference between the pay of the majors in the Royal Marines and those in the Line regiments, but he could not agree that this was a burning grievance, and the reasons which justified the alteration in the case of the Line regiments did not appear to hold good in regard to the Royal Marines. There was no major in the Royal Marine Artillery who would get the additional pay which was given by an Order in Council to majors in the Army. As to the rations of the Marines he was again obliged to point out that on his whole service the Marine was five-sixths of a penny a day better than the private soldier. The Marine service was a popular service, there was no lack of recruits, nor was there any reason to think that the recruits they got were in any way deteriorated. His hon. and gallant Friend had cited the opinion of some anonymous ex-First Sea Lord, but he could assure the Committee that, having looked over all the papers, and especially those with regard to the rations, there was no previous Sea Lord or any other Lord who had neglected his duties in the way his hon. Friend asked the Committee to believe, and if they had not dealt with the matter in the way desired it was because there was no sufficient reason for it. He hoped that, as he had now gone over the various points, the Committee would within a reasonable time allow the general discussion to terminate and let the Government get the Vote.

*SIR C. DILKE asked if it was the intention of the First Lord of the Admiralty to make any further statement to-night, for instance, on finance?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: I think I mentioned that we were going to have a Loan Bill, but it is not possible to state the precise amount at present.

*SIR C. DILKE said that last year, on the Army Vote and Navy Vote, the Committee was told they should be given an estimate of the loan money which, in addition to tax money, was to be spent in the financial year, and also in the next financial year.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: It would be exceedingly difficult at present as we should have to get the expenditure from Gibraltar and other foreign stations. However, the wish of the right hon. Gentleman is a natural and proper one, and, in answer to a Question, I will satisfy the right hon. Gentleman as to the expenditure.

MR. E. ROBERTSON said the right hon. Gentleman made another promise. He confined his answer to two points only, shipbuilding and works, and he said he intended to defer to a later hour in the evening what he had to say about manning.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY said his hon. Friend the Secretary to the Admiralty had dealt with the points which had been raised with regard to manning. As to the differences between the statement and the Estimate, referred to by the hon. and learned Member for Dundee, the former was an approximation to the actual figures, and the latter gave the exact amount.

MR. E. ROBERTSON said that he had suggested that explanation of one of the discrepancies, but it would not apply to all. There were three different sets of figures in regard to men before the Committee. They all added up to the same total, though varying in details, and this was confusing. He believed that his estimate of the decrease in new construction at £11,000 was correct, in spite of the right hon. Gentleman's answer that he had omitted the item of "cash new construction." He would not, however, press these questions now, but would put down a question to the right hon. Gentleman so as to get the matter cleared up.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON said the Secretary to the Admiralty seemed to think that he did not know much about the food supplied to the men in the Navy. He knew more of the men than the right hon. Gentleman, at any rate, though his knowledge was derived from forecastle and not quarter-deck sources.

*MR. MACARTNEY: It is not a question of forecastle and quarter-deck at all, It is a question of victualling.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON said that he knew what food was supplied to the men. At 6.30 in the morning they had a pint of cocoa and biscuits; at Twelve o'clock they had the allowance of beef or pork; and in the evening they had their tea and biscuits. Whatever they had over and above that was paid for out of their own pockets. The hon. Member for Lynn Regis talked of the men being over-fed. Well, it was at their own expense.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES: No. The men are allowed certain rations, and if they do not take them all up, they get an allowance. That they spend in delicacies. But all the food is either supplied by the Admiralty or out of the money given in its place.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON insisted that the men spent a large part of their wages in food. All that the hon. Member had to do was to make his inquiries from the seamen if he doubted what he said. He was not surprised that the officers should tell him a tale of that kind. With reference to the Naval Reserve, the figures of the hon. Member for Lynn Regis were altogether wrong, even with regard to the men employed in the Mercantile Marine. He had the returns for 1891, and the total number was 54,000.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES said he quoted from the return of 1896. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON said that it would be found that his return was more reliable. Where did the hon. Member get his additional seamen from? They lost annually as many as they gained in apprentices and seamen. The hon. Member said there were over 400,000 in the Navy, Mercantile Marine and the fishing industry, and that left 300,000 outside the Navy. He said there were no such numbers. There were thousands of foreigners engaged on board British ships with discharges which were not their own. They claimed to be Britishers, although they could not speak a word of their language. He contended that it was a very poor outlook indeed for their Naval Reserve. There was no reason to believe, as alleged by the hon. Member, that the British-born sailor was spoiling for a fight. There was no reason why he should be anxious to fight. In the time of peace he was denied employment. ["Oh!"] It was so. He had seen them denied employment on board their ships on the ground that they were Britishers. Foreigners were preferred because they were cheaper and worked longer hours, and these rejected men were the men who were supposed to be spoiling for a fight. He should like to know what the Admiralty intended to do with the two classes of Naval Reserves which they proposed to form? Did they intend that the competent merchant sailor should be placed upon the same footing as the ordinary fisherman. If so, that would not be at all a satisfactory arrangement to the merchant seaman. He should have liked to have heard something more satisfactory from the right hon. Gentleman with regard to the Naval Reserve pensions. The Naval Reserve men had been asking that their pensions should commence at 50 instead of at 60 years of age, and he should be glad if the right hon. Gentleman would give the Committee some information as to what he intended to do in the matter. ["Hear, hear!"]

*GENERAL LAURIE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest) said that he desired to refer to a subject that had been mentioned last Friday, but which he had not then spoken to, as the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Admiralty had asked that the Speaker should be allowed to leave the Chair. The subject was that of the employment of the Royal Marines at naval stations abroad. The Marines were now doing garrison duty at Vancouver's Island, and as the employment of them for such purposes was merely tentative, this was an opportunity to say how it had worked. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Admiralty had stated more than once this Session that in case of war he should not see his way to relieve our garrisons abroad. In that case the right hon. Gentleman must also not see his way to reinforce our squadrons abroad. If, however, the Marines were employed in garrison duty at our foreign stations, they would be ready at once to reinforce the squadrons in case of necessity. It might be asked, who were to take their places in the event of their being required to reinforce the squadrons? In the cases of Esquimalt and Halifax—two places with regard to which he had himself had some experience, as he had commanded the local forces at both—he could say that there would be no difficulty in replacing the garrisons by the local forces. At Halifax he had been able to relieve the garrison by local forces at three hours' notice when required for active service, thus leaving the garrisons free for other work. ["Hear, hear!"] He trusted that the Admiralty would consider his proposal, and would not dismiss it as an impracticable suggestion. Considerable difference of opinion appeared to prevail with regard to the number of seamen available for the Naval Reserve. The hon. Member for King's Lynn appeared to think that it consisted of a very large body of men; but other speakers believed that it consisted of only a small body. He could not see why we did not obtain powers to enrol and train a Naval Reserve to our colonies. As regarded Canada, she had over 70,000 deep-sea fishermen, and in the constituency he represented in the Dominion Parliament there were between 4,000 and 5,000 deep-sea fishermen, who were as thorough seamen as any who were to be found in the world. ["Hear, hear!"] The question was raised whether, if these men were enrolled in the Reserve, we might not be training men who would carry the knowledge they gained into another navy; but that was a risk the country must take, even in the training of a reserve in England. At any rate, he could guarantee that there would be no more risk of Canadian Reserve men going to another navy than of English Reserve men doing so; and the Canadian Government and people would look with the greatest interest upon such an experiment, and would give their best assistance to make it a success. ["Hear, hear!"] He had received a letter from the Finance Minister of the Dominion, in which that gentleman said that the project was one that would be received with hearty approval by the Government and people of the Dominion.

Mr. JONATHAN SAMUEL (Stockton): Are they prepared to share the cost?

*General LAURIE said he was not able to say what they were prepared to do in that respect. That was a matter in which they should be approached. If a reserve of 25,000 men was established for the British Navy, he took it that they were paid for by the British Government, and drilled under the British Admiralty, and he did not know that any Government would be prepared to pay for men in the service of the British Admiralty, though he believed the Canadian Government would be quite prepared, as they did now with their Militia, to raise the men and pay for them if they could drill them in their own way.

*Sir JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth) said he would not have taken part in the Debate had it not been that he had no opportunity the other night of saying anything as to the First Lord's Memorandum. He would, however, confine himself to one or two points on the *personnel.* In that connection he saw great evidence of confusion growing up in the organisation of the Navy. There had been a new departure. On two points with regard to the training of men the answers of the First Lord to precise questions put to him had not appeared to him to be accurate. He had himself put one question to the First Lord with regard to the requalification of Marine gunners after disembarking and before they embarked again. He asked the right hon. Gentleman to state the number of gunners who had embarked in 1896 having passed all the artillery drills, and the right hon. Gentleman replied that 17 per cent had done so. That meant that 83 per cent. had not passed. He had also asked what percentage of marine gunners re-embarking during 1896 had requalified in artillery gun drill, and the right hon. Gentleman had replied that there were no regulations. He knew, however, that there were regulations on the subject, and that the custom used to be that no man re-embarked until he had been requalified. He doubted whether the Admiralty were now alive to the necessity of the general training of these men. Then there had been a change of policy. Why was it that the Admiralty now kept so much less a proportion of Marine forces to the Navy than they used to? Down to very recently the consistent policy of the Admiralty was to keep a certain portion of the whole Navy Marine forces. In 1866-67 24 per cent. of the whole were Marine forces, and in 1876-78, the percentage was 23; but this year it was only 15 per cent. The principle of naval organisation up to a few years ago was to keep the blue-jackets at sea, and to keep the larger proportion of Marines on shore, care being taken to make them efficient by giving them a proper training at sea. There were now 69,000 seamen and boys, but only about 16,000 Marines. The proportion of the latter to the former used to be much larger. In the last two years a point had been reached which had never been reached before in peace. He alluded to the fact that there were more of the Marine forces at sea and fewer on shore. In the Estimates the number provided for afloat was 8,873, and the number on shore 6,957. Therefore the Admiralty contemplated keeping more Marines afloat than on shore. A statement made the other day by the First Lord had surprised him. The right hon. Gentleman, he understood, had said that there were 10,000 seamen and Marine pensioners who did so many days' drill every year. That statement surprised him, because the Admiralty had no power under statute to call on these pensioners for drill.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY, who was indistinctly heard, was understood to say that he had been misrepresented, and that the men alluded to by him as being called out for drill were the pensioner reserves, as distinguished from pensioners merely.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB expressed himself as satisfied with the right hon. Gentleman's explanation.

MR. T. LOUGH (Islington, W.) said that he wished to discuss the naval policy of the Government in its broad outlines. The Committee, he thought, had a right to complain of the way in which the right hon. Gentleman had introduced these Estimates. On the last occasion when the subject of the Navy was before the House, the Debate was opened by the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean, and the greater part of the First Lord's reply was devoted to answering the precise points which the right hon. Baronet raised. That afternoon again their expectation of hearing a general statement from the First Lord had not been fulfilled. The right hon. Gentleman had merely replied on points raised by the gallant Admiral opposite, and hon. Gentlemen representing dockyard constituencies. The Committee had not even yet been told what the total cost of the Navy was to be this year, although they gathered from the statement that had been issued that the amount was about £22,000,000. How much more had been appropriated from loans? It was the most tremendous expenditure they had heard of in this country; but not a word had been said that evening in deprecation of it. His right hon. friend the Member for the Forest of Dean (Sir C. Dilke), thought that more money should be spent, that we had not enough of strongly armoured ships, and that we were not strong as compared with other countries in Europe. That might be the opinion of the House of Commons, but there were many persons outside who felt nothing but the most intense alarm at the facility with which these burdens were thrown on the taxpayers. In the Estimates which had been presented there was a table of very great interest. In the appendix there was a statement of the cost of the new ships for the last 20 years. During the last ten years he found that the country had spent £48,000,000 on new construction; during the previous ten years they spent £15,000,000, or a total of £63,000,000. This year the cost of new construction would be £7,500,000; yet not a single voice had been raised in the House in favour of proceeding more slowly or more cautiously in undertaking these great works. In his judgment the First Lord of the Admiralty had made a very bellicose speech. The right hon. Gentleman said there were two things that might occur—(1) probably the Admiralty would not be satisfied with the expenditure of £25,000,000; and (2) in a certain eventuality he would be prepared to sanction large Supplementary Estimates. That was a most serious statement to make, and he for one protested against it. The expenditure was high enough for one year. The Committee had been unable to learn the amount of money that would be taken under the Naval Works Bill, and he should like to ask:—

> "Does this great expenditure make us feel safer in face of the other nations of the world than we did before?"

The right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean said that he did not feel satisfied because we were not so strong as France and Russia. But lately Germany had entered into competition with us, and was it suggested that we should be as strong as all the navies of the world combined? It looked as if we were going to enter upon that policy. To what could they trace this competition? Surely to the policy adopted without protest by the House of Commons. The more we built the more we had to build, and he said that it was time we adopted another policy and returned again to the good old policy of peace, retrenchment, and reform. He believed that we should find a great deal more safety in returning to it than in sanctioning this great expenditure the Committee had been dealing with. Complaining of the way in which they had been treated, he appealed to the First Lord, even at that late hour, to make some more satisfactory declaration than could be found in the inflated bellicose policy faintly adumbrated at an earlier hour of the evening. ["Oh, oh!"] The taxpayers of the country did not find this subject so amusing as apparently hon. Members opposite did. There were parts of the kingdom suffering under the crushing agony, he might almost say of the fast-growing weight, of taxation, and even the people of London and the richer parts of the country were beginning to look askance at these proceedings of the House. Why should we not return to the old policy of the country, and believe a little more in the rectitude of our purposes among the nations of the earth. There had been sneering reference to "unctuous rectitude," but better that than no rectitude at all. Had we as a nation lost belief in the blessings of peace? In the Queen's Speech at the opening of the Session, stress was laid on the fact that we had entered into a Treaty of Arbitration with one of the greatest nations of the world, and our Sovereign was made in the Speech to express the hope, founded on that fact, that other nations would enter with us on this peaceful policy. But these words were the only acknowledgment of the blessings of peace associated with the proceedings of this Session. Enormous sums voted for the Army and Navy seemed to anticipate a policy of war, and he firmly believed that the policy the Government were pursuing constituted the greatest menace to the peace of the world that existed at the present time. It was sad to think that a Statesman of the great reputation of the First Lord should have lost all sympathy with the old ideas in which he used to believe. The more was spent the less satisfaction followed, the further we went in this shameful race in expenditure the further we would have to go. We could not hope to equal the rest of the world in armaments. He appealed to the First Lord to say something in a more moderate spirit, upon which to found a hope that expenditure would not be increased, and that there would be an attempt to return to the more moderate Navy Estimates of fifteen years ago. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. J. GILHOOLY (Cork Co., W.) took the opportunity to call the attention of the First Lord of the Admiralty to a grievance in connection with the paying off of Irish sailors. It was the practice when one of Her Majesty's ships put in at an Irish port, and the time came for paying off the men, to transfer the men to an English port. This was reasonable where the great majority of the men were British, for it was desirable that the men should take the money home to their families, but where a great number of the men were Irish it was only fair that they should be paid in an Irish port, so that they might spend their money at home. Another matter to which he claimed attention had reference to the illegal trawling in Bantry Bay. For the prevention of this illegal trawling a gunboat was stationed in the Bay, but, notwithstanding this, the illegal trawling by steam trawlers was carried on at night and on Sundays. He hoped the First Lord would have attention given to these matters.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: I hope the time has now arrived when hon. Members will be content to let us have Vote A and Vote 1. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] We have had a long and interesting discussion, ranging over many subjects, and if I have not dealt with all of them, I may remind hon. Members that there will be an opportunity on most of the Votes—on all of them in fact—to raise these questions again.

MR. LOUGH: We cannot raise any question of general policy.

Mr. T. Lough.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: As regards the general policy of the Admiralty upon which the hon. Member has addressed me, may I venture to remind him that from no quarter of the House have there been more reproaches, if I may say reproaches, that I have not done enough, than from the quarter where the hon. Gentleman himself sits. The right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean Division was one of those who criticised our proposals, not unkindly, in that spirit, and upon several points doubts have been expressed from the other side of the House whether we have gone far enough, and whether we ought not to have increased our Estimates this year. I can assure the hon. Member, who spoke with so much feeling on the subject, that our one desire with this expenditure is to preserve peace, and I am firmly persuaded that the country would condemn us if we did not put ourselves in a position to insure peace, by showing we are prepared to defend ourselves. There is no aggressive or provocative policy in these Estimates, we have not gone beyond what we believe is necessary for the safety of the country. ["Hear, hear!"]

*CAPTAIN PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.) complained that a fair share of the shipbuilding work was not given to the Scotch yards. He thought more care ought to be taken to see that the work was more evenly distributed into the three kingdoms. He did not see why Admiralty inspectors should not be sent round, especially to the east coast of Scotland, to see if repairs could not be carried out at some of the smaller yards. He expressed great regret that the First Lord of the Admiralty had not seen his way to meet the request which had been made that the Royal yacht which it was proposed to build should be a first-class battleship, thus combining utility with what was really wanted, as was done in the case of the Royal yachts of the German and Russian Emperors. He warned the First Lord that unless he could take some steps to meet this view, he must expect opposition on the Estimates. He also supported the suggestion which had been put forward of obtaining recruits for the Navy from the colonies.

Mr. PATRICK M'HUGH (Leitrim, N.) desired to call attention to the case of a Naval pensioner now confined in the Sligo Lunatic Asylum, named John Devine.

*The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS: I think that discussion should properly be raised on the non-effective Vote.

Dr. TANNER (Cork, Mid) supported the demand which had been made by his hon. Friend near him (Mr. Gilhooly) that seamen should be paid when the Fleet might happen to be in Irish waters. Many of the men were of Irish birth, and if the money due to them for their services might be paid to them when they were in Irish waters, instead of sending them back to England, Ireland would then have some share of the amount which was expended on the seamen. He trusted the First Lord of the Admiralty would give an answer on this point.

The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY remarked that if the hon. Member would be good enough to put some question on the Paper, he would give an answer to it.

Resolution to be reported.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £4,696,000, be granted to Her Majesty to defray the expenses of wages etc., to officers, seamen, and boys, Coast Guard, and Royal Marines, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1898."

And, it being midnight, the Chairman left the Chair to make his report to the House.

Resolution to be reported upon Monday next; Committee also report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Committee deferred till Monday next.

CROFTERS' HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) ACT (1886) AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday next.

MIDWIVES' REGISTRATION BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday 25th March.

TRUCK ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday next.

ESTATES TAIL BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday next.

SHOP ASSISTANTS (HALF-HOLIDAY) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday 26th March.

SHOPS (EARLY CLOSING) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday 26th March.

SHOPS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday 26th March.

HIGHWAYS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday next.

LICENCES (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

VEHICLES (LIGHT) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday 7th April.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday next.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (COUNTY COUNCIL CLERKS) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday next.

SURVEYORS (COUNTY DUBLIN) BILL.

Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; read the Third time, and passed.

LICENSING EXEMPTION (HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT) BILL.

On the Order for the Second Reading of this Bill,

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER, Isle of Wight) said he would ask the indulgence of the House to make a few remarks in the nature of a personal explanation on behalf of the Kitchen Committee and himself in regard to this Measure. He was quite sure the House would be willing that the hon. Baronet the Member for the Cockermouth Division should state his objections to the Bill at any reasonable length even after Twelve o'clock. He felt, however, that it was unfair that the hon. Baronet, being unwilling to state his objections in that House, should write letters to the papers attacking the Kitchen Committee for their action in reference to this matter. This Bill was not in any sense a Party Measure, and was backed by representative Members from every part of the House. The Kitchen Committee at the beginning of the present Session considered the matter, and passed three resolutions, which he would venture to read. They were as follows:—

> "That, in the opinion of the Committee, the supply of wines and spirits as carried on for a great many years in the Palace of Westminster is for the convenience of the Members of the House and of the public who are called to attend as witnesses on Committees and on other matters of business. That a restriction of the sale of wine and spirits to Members of the House would not be practicable or for the convenience of those who are called upon to attend at various hours of the day or night. That the restrictions and conditions imposed by the ordinary licences and under the Licensing and Excise Acts are wholly inapplicable to the circumstances under which refreshments must be supplied in the precincts of the House."

It was upon those Resolutions being submitted to him that he assisted the Kitchen Committee in drafting this Bill; yet the hon. Baronet opposite had, on more than one occasion, stated in the Press, not in that House, that this Bill was brought in simply for the personal comfort of a portion of the Members of the House. That allegation was without foundation. If it were simply for the convenience of Members of the House no Bill would be necessary. It was because the public and others had to have these refreshments that a Bill was necessary. With regard to the attack made upon himself as a member of the Church of England Temperance Society, he did not choose to say a single word; but he thought it was scarcely fair to the Kitchen Committee that, instead of stating his objections where they could be answered, the hon. Baronet should see fit to indulge in these attacks.

SIR WILFRID LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth) said he was astonished to hear what had fallen from the hon. and learned Gentleman. He had made no attack upon him as a member of the Church of England Society. It was the best thing that he knew about him. [*Laughter.*] But after what he had stated it became more important than ever that they should have a proper discussion on this Bill. As he understood it, the Bill was not confined to Members of that House, but would make that House a licensed house for all-comers. As long as the House was sitting people could come to it from all parts of the town in order to finish up the night with a booze. [*Laughter.*] He objected to the Bill being taken at that time of the night. If it was an important Bill, of course it ought to be discussed at a proper time; if it was not important, he should still oppose it.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

House adjourned at Ten minutes after Twelve o'Clock until Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 15th March 1897.

LONDON (BOROUGH ROAD, SOUTHWARK) PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed.

CRETE.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: I desire to ask the noble Marquess opposite a question of which I have given him private notice—whether any response has been made by Her Majesty's Government to the communication received from the Greek Government on the 8th, I think, or the 10th of March—a communication made in reply to the the Identic Note presented by the Powers on March 2?

THE PRIME MINISTER (The MARQUESS OF SALISBURY): I may say of the Note to which the noble Lord has last referred as having been identic, that any communication made upon it would be of the same character; therefore it would not be Her Majesty's Government, but the six Powers, who would make the answer to which the noble Lord refers. Correcting the noble Lord's question to that extent, I have to say that no such answer has been made.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: I wish to defend myself from any charge of inaccuracy in the wording of my question. I thought an Identic Note differed from a Collective Note, and that a communication would be addressed by each of the Powers.

THE PRIME MINISTER: I believe the noble Lord is quite right, but the Identic Note must still be within the condition of being identic; therefore, if all the Powers do not address it, no one can.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: But it differs from a Collective Note?

THE PRIME MINISTER: Oh, yes.

SURVEYORS (COUNTY DUBLIN) BILL.

Brought from the Commons; Read 1ª; to be printed; and to be Read 2ª on Thursday next: (the Lord Morris).—[No. 31.]

House adjourned at Twenty-five minutes before Five o'Clock, till To-morrow a Quarter past Ten o'Clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 15th March 1897.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

CITY OF LONDON (INCLUSION OF SOUTHWARK) BILL.

On the order for the Second Reading of this Bill,

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.) moved that the Second Reading be postponed until to-morrow.

MR. E. H. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.), who had on the Paper a Motion for the rejection of the Bill, thought he had some reason to complain that this stage had been put off without any notice whatever being given to him, notwithstanding that his notice of opposition had been on the Paper for some time. It was in accordance with the usual practice and courtesy of that House that, when an hon. Member had given notice of opposition to a Bill, the promoters or, at all events, the agent should give him notice of any postponment. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. ALFRED LAFONE (Bermondsey, Southwark) remarked that he spoke to the hon. Member on Friday, and explained to him that hon. Members who were interested in the Bill had asked that it should be postponed till to-morrow—a request which had been acceded to.

MR. PICKERSGILL: My complaint is against the promoters of the Bill.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) observed that when a Bill was put down for Second Reading "by order," as was this Bill, it had always been taken on the day named unless both supporters and opponents agreed to a postponement. It was discourteous to those opposing a Bill if they did not receive from the promoters a notification of any intention to defer a stage.

MR. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton), while not wishing to prevent the postponement, pointed out that when the promoters of a private Bill, after any stage had been put down by order, desired that that stage should be postponed till a later day, they always gave notice to and consulted with the opponents of the Bill.

MR. R. K. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.) observed that he was in the House till 12 o'clock on Friday night, and was anxious to ascertain whether the Bill was to be taken or not, but could get no information. The Bill being down by order he had attended that day at great inconvenience.

THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. T. W. RUSSELL, Tyrone, S.) said the Bill proposed to put additional work on the Local Government Board, and they were in the same position as hon. Members opposite, not having had any notice of the postponement. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. EDMUND BOULNOIS (Marylebone, E.), as one of the promoters of the Bill, disclaimed, on their part, any intention of discourtesy to those opposing it. He was present by accident, because he quite understood on Friday afternoon that the agents had made arrangements with the opponents as to the postponement. He expressed his sincere regret that any inconvenience should have been caused by the misunderstanding which had arisen.

MR. CAUSTON pointed out that tomorrow, when it was proposed to take the Second Reading, would be an inconvenient day to many hon. Members.

Second Reading deferred until Monday next.

THOMPSON'S DIVORCE BILL [H.L.].

Read a Second time, and committed.

QUESTIONS.

VOLUNTEER OFFICERS (WINTER SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION).

SIR HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield Central): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War if the evening schools of instruction which the General Officer Commanding the Home District has been good enough to arrange during the winter for Volunteer officers can possibly be continued in the summer, having regard to the benefit accruing thereby to the Volunteer force, and the difficulty young officers in professions have of attending in the morning?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): The General Officer Commanding the Home District states that it would not be practicable during the summer months to hold a night school in addition to a day school, and that there are so many applications for the latter that he cannot recommend it should be omitted in favour of a night school.

PARCEL POST (LIVE BEES).

SIR HOWARD VINCENT: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, will he explain why the United Kingdom, alone of countries and colonies within the Postal Union, declines to carry live bees by post if securely fastened; and whether, having regard to the desirability of encouraging every branch of rural industry, the Postmaster General will be good enough to reconsider the restrictions placed by his predecessors upon this form of postal traffic, which in the United States and elsewhere appears not to be attended with any unsatisfactory results?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. R. W. HANBURY, Preston): I do not know whether my hon. and gallant Friend contemplates postal facilities for a single bee or a swarm—[*laughter*]—or whether he would also send by post other live specimens of rural industry. He is, however, mistaken in supposing the United Kingdom to stand alone in this matter. On the contrary, many countries and colonies within the Postal Union share its objection to the transmission of live bees in the ordinary mails. Against the transmission in these mails of anything likely either to damage the correspondence or to injure postal officials there is a general prohibition of the Union; live creatures are held by the British Post Office to come within this prohibition, and there seems to be no special ground for excepting live bees. The ordinary mails, it has to be borne in mind, are in this country frequently transferred by apparatus to and from railway trains in motion—a process necessarily attended by shock and consequent risk of breakage in the case of anything fragile or not securely enough packed; and in the event of such breakage happening to a consignment of live bees the creatures would almost certainly escape into the mail bag and produce unpleasant results. [*Laughter.*] It is possible, however, for an expert in packing bees to obtain the consent of the Postmaster General to their transmission by parcel post within the United Kingdom. But such permission is subject to conditions and restrictions, and cannot be extended to cases of transmission to or from places abroad, as parcels arriving from abroad are liable to examination in the Custom House.

Sir HOWARD VINCENT asked if such permission could be extended to the colonies, as there were breeders of queen bees in Sheffield who were anxious to have this facility?

Mr. HANBURY: No; I think a great many of the colonies refuse to carry bees by post.

CABLE COMPANIES (TARIFF OF CHARGES).

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he is aware of the discontent existing in commercial circles with the tariff of charges enforced by the Cable Companies, ranging from 4s. a word to India up to 9s. 5d. a word to Queensland, 10s. 8d. a word to Japan, and 12s. 11d. a word to British Guiana; whether he has been informed that the merchants engaged in Anglo-Australian trade, and the public generally, have to pay considerably over £1,000 a day or £412,000 a year, for cablegrams, and the Government at least £100,000 a year in communicating with the colonies and foreign governments and with its naval and military officers; is he aware that experts have estimated that a set of cables in every respect equal to those existing could be constructed, paid for, and maintained by the State at a cost which would give to the people cheap cable communication to all parts of the Empire for a tenth of the present rates; and whether, seeing that all the chief cables of the world belong to a few British companies, which are practically under one common and supreme direction, and pay large dividends, he will recommend the appointment of a Royal Commission to consider the whole question of cable communication, and the effects of the present charges as regards the trade and security of the Empire, and also the question of the acquisition of the existing cables by the State, with a view to extend and cheapen cable communication?

Mr. HANBURY: The Postmaster General has from time to time received representations on the subject of the charge to India, and has endeavoured to bring about a reduction, but so far without success. The charge to Japan by the cheapest route is 8s., not 10s. 8d., and to British Guiana not 12s. 11d., but 10s., He is not aware of any general feeling of discontent, and, as he does not think that any useful purpose would be served by an inquiry into the questions raised by the hon. Member, he is not prepared to recommend the appointment of a Royal Commission. The Postmaster General has no information as to the amount paid for telegrams by merchants engaged in the Anglo-Australian trade, and it is not within his province to state what the expenditure of the Government is on telegrams to and from places abroad. The Postmaster General has not had before him any calculations as to the cost of constructing and maintaining a set of cables to take the place of those which are already in existence, and he has no reason to suppose that cable communication to all parts of the Empire could be given for a tenth of the present rates. It would seem to be entirely contrary to sound policy for the State to attempt to acquire all the existing cables. They are necessarily landed at a great many points in foreign territory, and it is not to be supposed that foreign countries would acquiesce in the working of the cables by the British Government, although they are quite ready to come to terms with British companies. At the Telegraph Conference in Budapest arrangements were made for very considerable reductions in the charges to various parts of the world. Some of these reductions are already in force, and the rest will be brought into operation on the 1st of July next. I may add that these arrangements could not have been made without the cordial co-operation of the British cable companies.

PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS (SCOTLAND).

Mr. J. H. C. HOZIER (Lanark, S.): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether he is aware that the cost of the Parish

Council Elections in the various parishes of Lanarkshire has been greatly in excess of the cost of the corresponding School Board Elections; and, if so, whether anything can be done in the interest of the ratepayers to limit such expenditure?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire): The School Board Elections of 1894 in Lanarkshire cost £4,064. The Parish Council Elections of 1895 in Lanarkshire cost £4,421, in addition to £1,048, the cost of making up the first Parish Council register. Without committing myself to the opinion that these figures are sufficient to prove that the expenditure on parish council elections, taken all round, was excessive, I think they suggest the desirability of some inquiry into the subject. I have conferred with the Secretary for Scotland, who will be glad to give the matter his consideration. As the hon. Member is no doubt aware, the first parish council elections were held under exceptional arrangements, and in future they will be combined with the County Council and municipal elections.

INTERMEDIATE EXAMINATIONS (IRELAND).

MR. M. J. FLAVIN (Kerry, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will grant the Return asked for in connection with the Intermediate Examinations (Ireland) 1896?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds Central): The Assistant Commissioners of Intermediate Education have communicated with the Chairman of the Board in reference to this Return, but so far I have not learned with what result. Perhaps the hon. Member will repeat the Question on Thursday next.

FLAX GROWING (IRELAND).

MR. JAMES DALY (Monaghan, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state what steps he intends taking to improve the growth of flax in Ireland, as promised by him last Session?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: A large amount of information respecting the treatment and culture of flax has been obtained by the Irish Land Commission in consultation with a representative Committee consisting of the leading spinners and of well-known agriculturists of Ulster. It is not my intention to take any action in the matter pending the passage through Parliament of the Board of Agriculture Bill.

AMERICAN MAILS.

SIR JOHN LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he is aware that the *Adriatic*, which left Queenstown on 11th February with the American mails, was overtaken and passed by the *Lucania*, which, leaving three days later, arrived 28 hours before the *Adriatic*; and that the steamer which left in the mid-week following only arrived one day sooner than the steamer which left at the end of the week; whether steps can be taken to prevent the twice-a-week service being practically made a single service; whether he is aware that on the eastern passage the *Teutonic* and *Majestic* frequently beat the steamers of the American Line which bring the mails, so that the public are inconvenienced both ways; and whether negotiations can be entered into with the American postal authorities for arranging that the mails leaving both sides of the Atlantic shall be conveyed by the fastest steamers.

MR. HANBURY: The *Adriatic*, which left Queenstown on the 11th of February, arrived at Sandy Hook 21 hours after the *Lucania*, which started from Queenstown on the 14th, and, according to telegrams published in the newspapers, the steamer which left Queenstown on the following Thursday arrived 27 hours before the steamer which started three days later. As explained in this House a fortnight ago, the *Adriatic* is only used occasionally, when one of the better steamers has to be withdrawn for overhaul—a course which is expressly provided for in the mail contract. It cannot be admitted that the twice-a-week service is practically made a single service; there are generally intervals of two days or more between the arrivals of the mails at New York. So far as the homeward mails are concerned, the mails brought by vessels of the American Line during the last year were more frequently received in London before than after those brought by the *Majestic* and *Teutonic*, while there are other parts of the United Kingdom of which the reverse is the case. The Postmaster General does not propose to enter into negotiations with the American Post Office, as suggested by the hon. Member, because the contracts, which secure us all the year round the services of the fastest ships afloat, and which were made with the full knowledge and approval of this House, debar us from diverting any letters, &c., except those specially marked, from the ships of the contractors.

ASSIZES (IRELAND).

MR. DALY: I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland (1) whether he is aware of the fact that jurors in County Monaghan at the late assizes had to travel over 26 Irish miles to see the Judge presented with white gloves, there being no business to be done, and that the County Court Judge of County Monaghan has several times sympathised with the jurors of this county for having to attend before him when no business was to be transacted; and (2) whether he will take steps to prevent jurors being put to the trouble and expense of having to attend assizes or quarter sessions when there is no business for them?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. ATKINSON, Londonderry, N.): If the hon. Member will refer to the Votes, he will see that I have given notice of a Bill to remedy the grievance under which jurors suffer in being obliged to attend Quarter Sessions unnecessarily. I have no reason to doubt the accuracy of the statements in the first paragraph of the Question, but they are quite exceptional. I do not see my way to extend the scope of the contemplated Measure to the case of jurors attending at assizes, or to introduce independent legislation with regard to them.

MR. JAMES ROCHE (Kerry, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether his attention has been called to the charge of Chief Baron Palles to the Grand Jury of the County of Kerry in opening the Spring Assizes at Tralee on Thursday last, in which he stated that the criminal calendar was one of extraordinary lightness, there being only five bills to come before them; and (2) whether, in view of this satisfactory judicial pronouncement, he will endeavour to make some substantial reduction in the large force of extra police now stationed in that county, as the cost of the same bears with especial force on what is now the highest rated county in Ireland?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I have seen a newspaper report of the learned Judge's address to the Grand Jury at the opening of the Kerry Spring Assizes, in which he referred to the improvement in the condition of the county as shown by the Constabulary Returns. With regard to the second paragraph, there has been effected a reduction of 35 men in the extra police establishment of the county during the past twelve months, consequent on the improved state of the county, and this reduction is equivalent to a relief to local rates of £1,100 per annum. The strength of the extra force in the county at present is 65 men, as compared with 151 in March 1894.

CONVICTS UNDER SENTENCE.

MR. PICKERSGILL: I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that a convict undergoing the preliminary stage of his term has, for a period of nine months, to work, eat and sleep in one small cell, in which he is confined for 23 hours out of every 24, at all seasons of the year; whether he is aware that several principal officers of prisons have described this confinement as excessive, and as producing injurious results, both moral and physical; and whether he will confer with the Prison Commissioners with a view to the granting to this class of prisoners of more than one hour's exercise per diem?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY, Lancashire, Blackpool): I am aware that a convict under sentence of penal servitude, with the exception of his daily attendance at chapel and hour of exercise, passes the first nine months of his sentence in separate confinement. I believe the hon. Member to be misinformed as to the opinions held by the principal officers of the prisons in which convicts are received with regard to the effects of this confinement. The amount of exercise necessary for the health of each prisoner is left by statute to be determined by the prison surgeon, and I am perfectly content that, under that statute, the surgeons should exercise a liberal discretion.

Mr. PICKERSGILL asked the right hon. Gentleman whether he was aware that Captain Johnson, the Governor of Dartmoor Prison, had condemned the system of separate confinement for nine months before the Departmental Committee which inquired into the matter?

Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY said he had no doubt the hon. Member was correct in what he stated, but he was not aware of the fact.

Mr. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would make himself acquainted with the evidence placed before the Departmental Committee?

Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY said he was perfectly ready to do so, but the question of the amount of exercise necessary for the health of each prisoner was left by statute to the discretion of the prison surgeon, who, he thought, should be allowed a liberal interpretation.

FERMANAGH SCHOOL ESTATE.

Mr. P. C. DOOGAN (Tyrone, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that the tenants on the Fermanagh estate of the Commissioners of Education petitioned some time ago for the sale of their holdings to the occupiers, and that the Estate Committee of Enniskillen recommended the adoption of that course in the interests of the fund for educational purposes; and whether the prayer of the memorial and the recommendation of the Estate Committee will be acceded to?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: A memorial to the effect stated was received by the Commissioners in November of last year, and the Estate Committee expressed approval of the principle of sale to the tenants at a fair purchase, to be mutually agreed upon. The question of sale is now under the consideration of the Commissioners.

Mr. DOOGAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what is the gross rental of the Fermanagh School Estate, and what is the annual cost of management?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: The gross rental of this estate for the year ended November 1896 was £1,944 10s., and the cost of estate management in the same period was about £120.

HOUSE OF COMMONS (MEMBERS' SMOKING ACCOMMODATION).

Mr. JOHN AIRD (Paddington, N.): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works if, while arrangements are being made for an additional smoking room, Members may be allowed, after 9 o'clock, to smoke in the South Dining Room, this being immediately adjacent?

*Sir C. DALRYMPLE (Ipswich): May I ask my right hon. Friend, before he answers the question, whether he will bear in mind, in making further arrangements for smoking, that all Members of the House do not smoke?

The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS (Mr. Akers-Douglas, Kent, St. Augustine's): I frankly admit the insufficiency of smoking room accommodation in this building. So far as I am concerned, I see no objection to the proposal of my hon. Friend, but it is one on which I think the Kitchen Committee might with advantage be consulted.

COOTE ESTATE (COUNTY MONAGHAN).

Mr. D. MACALEESE (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland is he aware that great dissatisfaction prevails among certain tenants on the Coote estate, County Monaghan, with the rent reductions given by Sub-Commissioners Crean, Boyd, and Creery, in cases tried at Cootehill on the 25th November last, owing to the fact that the reductions in these cases amounted to but 24 per cent., while tenants on adjoining estates have been granted 33 per cent. under equal conditions of tenure, soil, climate, and market contiguity; and can he explain upon what principle the decisions in these respective cases were based?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: I am not aware whether the facts are as stated in the first paragraph. The rents fixed by Assistant Commissioners are fixed after hearing evidence offered to them by the parties and after an inspection of the holdings. Their orders are made in a judicial capacity, and if the parties are dissatisfied it is open to them to appeal.

AFRICA (MILITARY OPERATIONS).

Mr. H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether he will furnish the Return on this day's Paper relating to details of recent military operations in Africa?

Mr. BRODRICK: The Return in question would have to be obtained from the several Governments and Protectorates concerned; and its preparation would probably take much time and labour. On the other hand a Return is now in preparation of casualties on warlike operations from 1891 to 1896 inclusive; this will include most of the information desired by my hon. Friend.

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER: Will that be ready during the present Session?

Mr. BRODRICK: I hope it will. We shall lose no time about it.

LONDON PARKS (CYCLING TRACKS).

Mr. H. SETON-KARR (St. Helen's): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether, on general grounds of public convenience and safety, provision can be made in the Estimates for the construction of cycling tracks in such of the London parks as are suitable for the purpose?

Mr. AKERS-DOUGLAS: I am not prepared to recommend the Government to embark upon the very considerable outlay that would be entailed were they to commence the formation of cycling tracks, which would, moreover, in my opinion, seriously injure the appearance of the parks.

POST OFFICE ESTABLISHMENTS.

Sir ALBERT ROLLIT (Islington, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether the Revenue Departments Estimates can be put down at an early date, so as to enable the Post Office Departmental Committee's Report and the Treasury Minute thereon to be considered by the House?

Mr. HANBURY: I am unable to make any statement to my hon. Friend as to the date on which these Estimates will be taken.

SUCK DRAINAGE AWARD.

Mr. D. KILBRIDE (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether extra police have been drafted into North and East Galway to protect the Sheriff's bailiff in making seizures under decrees granted in connection with the Suck Drainage Award; will he state how many police are so engaged; when they commenced this duty; how long it is intended they should be so employed; and what is the cost per week; and whether the charge is a county or baronial charge, and off what particular area this charge will be levied?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: The duty of protecting the Sheriff's bailiffs in the execution of these decrees has been carried out by a few of the local police, and no extra police have been drafted into the county for the purpose. Any additional expense that may have been incurred will, therefore, be borne by the Constabulary Vote, and not locally.

Mr. JOHN ROCHE (Galway, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received resolutions passed at several public meetings held in County Galway within the last six months, called to protest against the tax levied under the Suck Drainage Award and asking for relief; whether, for example, he is aware that in the case of Michael Lohan (Matt), in the neighbourhood of Ballygar, the tax charged on his holding is £8 13s. 3d., the judicial rent of this holding fixed in 1888 £6 6s., area 8a. 2r. 0p. Irish plantation measure, the area of holding on which tax is levied 7 acres Irish plantation measure, the tax imposed on the land said to be improved being about £1 5s. per acre annually; also Bridget Kenny, area 17a. 1r. 0p. Irish plantation measure, drainage tax £11 14s. 9d., over 13s. per acre, rent £9, a large portion of this holding being bog land not worth more than 5s. per acre; and whether he will induce the Government to make a grant in aid of this impost?

The Hon. Member further asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—whether he is aware that in the neighbourhood of Ballygar, County Galway, several tenants holding about an acre or two of lowland are charged under the Suck Drainage Award as much as 30s. per acre Irish plantation measure, and over; whether in these cases the upland, unaffected by the drainage, was included in the area improved; and, whether he can state on what principle the award was made?

MR. HANBURY: I understand that the hon. Member's Questions refer to the townlands of Tryhill East and West, and I have already explained, in answer to a Question put by him on the 20th February 1896, that these tenants hold under 99 years leases, and, therefore, are proprietors as well as occupiers for the purposes of the Drainage Acts. As occupiers, they are only liable for the actual benefit to their holdings resulting from the Drainage Works. As proprietors, they have to pay their share, along with other landlords, of the unprofitable outlay including maintenance. In this double capacity, Michael Lohan has to pay £8 17s. 7d., of which the occupier's share is £3 14s. 4d., or 5s. 4d. per statute acre (equal to 8s. 9d. per Irish acre) and the landlord's share is £5 3s. 3d. Similarly, Bridget Kenny has to pay £12 0s. 7d., of which the occupier's share is £5 0s. 8d. or 3s. 7d. per statute acre (equal to 5s. 9d. per Irish acre), and the landlord's £6 19s. 11d. The average rate on the other tenants *qua* occupiers is 8s. per statute acre (equal to 13s. per Irish acre). The upland which is unaffected by the drainage has not been included in the area improved, and except as collateral security there is no charge on it. The principle of the award is laid down in the River Suck Drainage Act 1889. As I have repeatedly explained in answer to similar questions, the Act provides that the actual improvements in the holdings shall be charged on the occupiers, and the unprofitable outlay and maintenance on the proprietors. The Government has already made a free grant of £50,000, and I can hold out no hope of further assistance from the taxpayer.

MR. KILBRIDE asked whether the increase in the value of the land under the improvement scheme was worth the money that had been expended?

MR. HANBURY: Yes, Sir. So far as the occupiers are concerned, the extra charge on them is represented by the rise in the value of the land itself.

REFORMATORIES FOR INEBRIATES.

MR. H. HOBHOUSE (Somerset, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Bill for the establishment of Reformatories for Inebriates, announced in Her Majesty's Gracious Speech, is likely to be introduced?

SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: I am afraid I cannot, at present, say. The Bill has been for some time in a forward state of preparation, but there are still remaining some important points which require to be settled.

WRECK (INDIAN TROOPSHIP "WARREN HASTINGS").

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether he will consider the advisability of indemnifying to some extent the troops which were on board the *Warren Hastings* for the losses they sustained, more especially as their conduct upon the occasion of the wreck has been the subject of commendation by the Military authorities themselves, as well as by the public at large?

MR. BRODRICK: No claims have yet been received for indemnification for losses consequent on the wreck of the *Warren Hastings*, but the whole question is under consideration with a view to the fair treatment of those concerned.

CONTRABAND TOBACCO.

CAPTAIN NORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he can state the amount of the stock of seized tobacco already accumulated in the Queen's Warehouse in London; and whether he will consider the advisability of having some portion of it allotted to the pensioners of Chelsea Hospital, seeing that a large portion is distributed yearly to troops ordered on Foreign Service, and even to the inmates of Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum?

MR. HANBURY: The quantity of seized tobacco accumulated in the Queen's Warehouse in London at the present time is 5,899lb. There will, no doubt, be a certain surplus of tobacco in the current year, after meeting the demands of the criminal lunatic asylums and the Botanic Gardens, and the Board of Customs is under promise to the War Office to assign such surplus for the use of troops ordered abroad, should it prove sufficient. There would be this objection to diverting it to the use of Chelsea pensioners, that they are not confined to the hospital, as criminal lunatics are to the asylums, and there would be no security against their selling it outside.

WOOLWICH ARSENAL (WAGES).

CAPTAIN NORTON: I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office when the promised statement with reference to the wages of the Government employés at Woolwich may be expected?

The HON. MEMBER further asked the Under Secretary of State for War—when the employés of the Royal Army Clothing Department may hope for a reply to their memorial forwarded through the Director of Clothing in October last?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. POWELL-WILLIAMS, Birmingham, S.): Any statement that may have to be made on the wages question will be in connection with the Estimates for the Ordnance Factories and the Vote for Clothing.

ORDNANCE FACTORIES (SUPERANNUATION).

CAPTAIN NORTON: I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office when the Government employés at the Ordnance Factories may hope for a reply to their memorial with reference to superannuation, presented in April 1895?

MR. POWELL-WILLIAMS: The subject is still under consideration by certain officials of the War Department, to whom, as being specially conversant with such matters, it was referred. They have investigated it as it affects not only the War Office but several other Departments concerned. The inquiry has necessarily occupied a considerable time, but a Report on the matter as it affects the War Office will be shortly made.

SUNDAY POST (COUNTY TIPPERARY).

MR. J. F. HOGAN (Tipperary, Mid): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether a memorial containing upwards of 200 signatures, including those of the local parish priest and curate, has been received from Clonakenny and Couraganeen, parish of Bournea, County Tipperary, requesting the establishment of a Sunday post for the general public convenience, which is only opposed by a small minority; and whether it is proposed to take any steps to meet the wishes of the great majority of the residents in this respect?

MR. HANBURY: A memorial containing 120 signatures, including those of the local parish priest and curate, has been received from Clonakenny and Couraganeen, requesting the establishment of a Sunday post from Roscrea. Under regulations of long standing a Sunday post can only be established in a rural district on receipt of a memorial signed by the recipients of not less than two-thirds of the correspondence for the places affected, and in the present instance it is found from returns taken that the memorialists receive about one-fifth only of the correspondence for the Roscrea and Clonakenny post. In the circumstances the Postmaster General is unable to comply with their request.

EMIGRANTS' INFORMATION OFFICE.

MR. HOGAN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the vacancies on the Managing Committee of the Emigrants' Information Office, caused by the retirement of Messrs. Brassy, Burnett and Town, have yet been filled up; and, if not, whether an effort will be made to secure the services of gentlemen familiar by personal experience with practical colonising work in Canada, Australia and South Africa respectively?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): The vacancies have not yet been filled up, but care will be taken to secure representatives who have colonial experience or special acquaintance with the classes in this country from which emigrants are drawn.

SCIENCE AND ART EDUCATION (IRELAND).

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, will he explain on what basis of calculation a sum equal to only 2½ per cent. of the gross amount is voted for Science and Art Education in Ireland, and how many centres of examination are there at present in Ireland; and whether it is proposed to extend the operations of the Department in Ireland by a more liberal treatment in the matter of money grants?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir JOHN GORST, Cambridge University): The amount voted for

Science and Art Education in Ireland is 5 per cent., and not 2½ per cent. of the gross amount. It is calculated on the same basis as in Great Britain, viz., the number of students who attend the science and art schools and classes. There are 150 centres of examination in Ireland. There is a special grant of £3,500 for technical instruction in Ireland. Otherwise, Ireland is treated in the same manner as the rest of the United Kingdom.

Mr. G. MURNAGHAN (Tyrone, Mid): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, will he state how much of last year's grant to the Science and Art Department was paid respectively to England, to Scotland, and to Ireland?

Sir J. GORST: The amounts are as follows:—

England	£611,913
Scotland	87,348
Ireland	46,109
Total	£745,370

ST. VINCENT (LABOURING POPULATION).

*Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies (1) whether Sir Charles Bruce has informed the Legislative Council of St. Vincent that a rapidly increasing exodus of the able-bodied labouring class has been taking place from the colony, and that every effort should be made to keep the people and to attract those who have gone to return to the island; and added that it was in the power of a single proprietor to abandon the cultivation of one-fourth of the occupied area of the colony, and to deprive probably one-fourth of the population of their means of existence; (2) whether, in spite of His Excellency's expression of belief that no proprietor would avail himself of the power placed in his hands without some provision for the labouring population by whose aid his estates have been maintained, something of the kind has now happened; (3) what revision of the Crown Lands Regulations has taken place; and (4) what steps are being taken to secure the late Governor's objects of the creation of a peasant proprietary by the purchase or lease of allotments, and the payment of wages in money?

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: The answer to the first part of the right hon. Member's Question is in the affirmative. A report having been received last August of the intention of a large estate owner in the island to discontinue the cultivation of his estates for 1898, the late Governor made inquiry as to his intentions in the matter, but, up to the present date, so far as I am aware, no reply to that inquiry has been received. Both of the matters referred to in the latter part of the Question are under the consideration of the local Government, and the attention of the new Governor has been specially drawn to the correspondence with his predecessor regarding them.

FACTORY ACT PROSECUTIONS (LOW MOOR).

*Sir CHARLES DILKE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to alleged breaches of the Factory Act at Low Moor, and especially to the decision of the Bradford West Riding Court in a second case in which the defendants were charged with failing to exhibit a placard in accordance with Sub-section 1 (a) of Section 40 of the Factory and Workshops Act, 1895, the Justices holding that the inspector could not proceed on a second information under the same Section; and whether instructions have been given to the inspector to take further steps in the case?

Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: My attention has been called to this matter. I am informed that the magistrates, having dismissed the first summons against the defendants on the ground that the pieces of cloth measured could not be identified, expressed the opinion that the second summons could not be sustained, as the "particulars" section only describes one offence, and the summons related, therefore, to a matter which had already been decided. Upon this the second summons was withdrawn. There is no power to take further steps in the case now, but attention will be paid to the point if similar proceedings have again to be instituted.

SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION (HEYWOOD).

Mr. J. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Notts, Mansfield): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he is aware that the School Attendance Committee at Heywood has summoned for non-attendance at school 57 parents of children who were formerly scholars in the lately-closed United Methodist Free Church School; and that the parents having, on various grounds, refused to send their children to the other schools in the town, the School Attendance Committee has adjourned all the cases, pending the receipt of information from the Education Department; whether he is aware that the Heywood Town Council, on the 11th instant, resolved for the third time to apply to the Department to order a School Board to be formed, in accordance with Section 12 of the Education Act, 1870; and whether, having regard to these and other facts, and to the disturbed state of feeling in the town, the Department will, without further delay, reply to the repeated requests of the Town Council, for the appointment of a School Board?

Sir J. GORST: My attention has been drawn to the facts mentioned in the first and second paragraphs. The question of the formation of a School Board is still under consideration; but I ought to point out that, even if a Board were formed, the scruples of those who will not send their children to the existing schools would not be obviated. The Board could not build a new school unless there were a deficiency of accommodation, not in course of being supplied. At present there is not.

ROSSCARBERRY CONVENT.

Mr. MACALEESE: On behalf of the hon. Member for Cork County, S. (Mr. Edward Barry), I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the revising officer appointed by the Commissioner of Valuation, in his recent revision of the Clonakilty Union, has placed an increased valuation on the new convent premises at Rosscarberry; and, as those buildings are used exclusively for educational purposes and for the instruction of poor girls in the locality in weaving and other industries, whether the Commissioner of Valuation should have exempted the convent buildings from rates under the terms of 17 Vic., c. 8, s. 2?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: In the Valuation Lists for Clonakilty Union, issued to the Rating Authorities on January 26th 1897, there is an increase in the valuation of the Convent referred to, consequent on extensive additions which have lately been made to the premises. An appeal has been lodged, and the question of exemption is now under consideration.

POOR RELIEF (IRELAND) BILL.

Mr. MACALEESE: On behalf of the hon. Member for Cork County, S. (Mr. Edward Barry), I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he will introduce a Clause into the Poor Relief Bill creating ballot voting for the election of Poor Law Guardians in Ireland; and (2) whether he will assimiliate the Poor Law to the Parliamentary Franchise?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: The answer to both Questions is in the negative. Such provisions would be outside the purpose of the Bill.

RIFLE VOLUNTEERS (1st SUTHERLAND HIGHLAND).

Mr. T. C. H. HEDDERWICK (Wick Burghs): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been drawn to the facts in connection with the recent dismissal of Private Adam Robertson, the holder of a long-service medal, from his regiment, the 1st Sutherland Highland Rifle Volunteers; whether a Volunteer so dismissed has an appeal from the finding of his superior officer to the Secretary of State for War; and whether, taking the circumstances of the case into account, the Secretary of State for War can see his way to reinstate the said Private Adam Robertson?

Mr. BRODRICK: This case has not been reported to Headquarters. Under the Volunteer Act of 1863, the Commanding Officer of a Volunteer Corps has the right to dismiss a member; but the member dismissed can appeal to Her Majesty through the Secretary of State for War.

DONERAILE ESTATE (COUNTY CORK).

Mr. J. C. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Irish

Land Commissioners can give any information respecting the application of an evicted tenant named M'Grath, on Lord Castletown's Doneraile estate, to be reinstated under the 47th section of the Land Act 1896; is the Land Commission aware that M'Grath offered to give solvent security for the payment of rent for five years, and to have rent fixed by arbitration or by the Land Commissioners; and whether, in view of the fact that the evicted tenant believed that Lord Castletown would join in the application under the section above-named, the Land Commission will refund the amount of the fee paid by the tenant?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: An application was made in the usual form to the Land Commission by David M'Grath, with a view to his re-instatement as tenant in his former holding under Lord Castletown. M'Grath was evicted in March 1895, being five years in arrear with his rent. The landlord objected to the application being treated as a joint application, and the former tenant was thereupon informed that no further proceedings could be taken under his application. The Land Commission have no information as to the alleged offer of security by M'Grath, and they state he was not charged any fee by them.

Mr. FLYNN: Do I understand the right hon. Gentleman to say that the Land Commission charge no fee?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: So I understand.

Mr. FLYNN: If I can bring before the right hon. Gentleman evidence that a fee was charged in this case, will he order the fee to be returned?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: Certainly, if the hon. Member brings such evidence before me.

METROPOLITAN POLICE BOOTS.

Captain NORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether the cost of the boots to be issued to the members of the Metropolitan Police Force in April next will be the same as that for the previous issue; (2) why it is expected that the boots about to be issued will remain in good order for a longer period than those issued upon any previous occasion; and (3) whether, when the choice between the two systems was given to the men, the fact that the weekly payment would be six months in arrear was not made clear, whereas it was distinctly stated that failure to produce two pairs of boots in good, sound serviceable condition would render the officer liable to punishment, such neglect being regarded as an offence against discipline?

Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: The answer to the first paragraph is in the affirmative, and to the second, that no such expectation is entertained. The men were distinctly informed last year by the notice on the voting paper which was issued to them that the money allowance would commence on the 7th October 1897, but that they would not be required to purchase a new pair until the boots to be last issued were in need of repair. Failure to possess proper boots would, after due caution, render the officer liable to punishment; but it is not intended, or expected, that the new regulations will in any degree operate to the prejudice of the men.

PRESENCE OF FOREIGN REPRESENTATIVE AT PUBLIC MEETING.

Mr. T. W. LEGH (Lancashire, Newton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it is in accordance with diplomatic usage for a foreign representative to take part in public meetings which involve discussion of the policy of the Government to which he is accredited?

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): Before that Question is asked, Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask you, Sir, whether it is in order for the hon. Member to address a question which is intended to cast a serious reflection on the conduct of the representative of a friendly Power in this country. ["Hear, hear!"]

***Mr. SPEAKER**: I do not see anything out of order in the question.

***The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS** (Mr. George Curzon, Lancashire, Southport): The presence of a foreign representative on such occasions is unusual and scarcely decorous. But no positive rule against it is known to exist, provided the representative does not actively interfere in a manner affecting the internal politics of the country.

Mr. LEGH: Is it not the fact that the Government of the United States ordered Lord Sackville to leave Washington because he was alleged to have interfered—

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! That does not arise out of the Question.

Mr. FLYNN: Who is to be the judge of the decorum of such proceedings? [*Opposition cheers.*]

Mr. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): Is it not within the absolute right of a foreign representative to be present at a public meeting if he previously receives the permission of his Government to do so?

*Mr. CURZON: That is a matter which affects the relations of the Minister in question with his own Government. It has nothing to do with me.

CRETE.

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what steps were taken to make known to the Cretan insurgents that the autonomy of the island was assured by the Great Powers; and whether it is the case that the information in question was withheld from the insurgents in the vicinity of Canea; and, if so, who was the intermediary to whom the communication was confided?

*Mr. CURZON: The Commanders of the ships of the Allied Fleet that have been sent to different parts of the island were instructed to distribute a Proclamation to the effect that the Great Powers had assumed the responsibility for the future of the island. A formal proclamation of autonomy is now being made, it being very doubtful whether the fact that autonomy has been guaranteed by the Powers is at all widely known. I do not know through what intermediary, if any, the information was conveyed to the insurgents in the vicinity of Canea.

Mr. J. M. MACLEAN (Cardiff): When proclamation is made of autonomy, will any explanation be given to the Cretans as to what is meant by autonomy? [*Opposition cheers.*]

*Mr. CURZON: Considering that the Cretans have been agitating for autonomy for 100 years—[*cheers and laughter, and a* Nationalist Member: "So have the Irish!"]—I think we may assume that they understand very well what the word means. But, in any case, in the proclamation it will be made perfectly clear to them that autonomy means in the case of Crete that they will not in any circumstances revert to the rule of the Sultan. [*Cheers.*]

Mr. M. J. FLAVIN: Have proclamations been issued there for the last 100 years? [*Laughter.*]

[No answer was given.]

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether any explanation has been received respecting the failure of the Greek Commodore to communicate to the insurgents in the neighbourhood of Canea the message of the Admirals of the Great Powers, forbidding any further advance towards the town, and offering medical assistance for the wounded?

General Sir HENRY HAVELOCK-ALLAN (Durham, S.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Admiral commanding the British in Cretan waters has reported that the communication from the Admirals of the combined Powers to the effect that the insurgents would be fired upon if they advanced beyond their present positions was intrusted to the Greek Commodore Reineck to be delivered to the insurgents with whom he was in frequent communication; and, will he explain how it happened that the message of the Admirals was not communicated to the insurgents?

*Mr. CURZON: No further information on this subject has been received since the telegram from the British Admiral of the 11th inst., the substance of which I communicated to the House on the 12th.

Captain DONELAN (Cork, E.): May I ask whether instructions have been sent to Admiral Harris to satisfy himself in future that his information is accurate before he communicates it for publication to the Correspondent of *The Times* in Crete?

*Mr. CURZON: The hon. Member is under a misapprehension. The telegram I read out to the House was to the effect that Admiral Harris had had an interview with the insurgents, and reported them as having given him certain information. [*Ministerial cheers.*]

Captain DONELAN: Is it not the case that Admiral Harris communicated himself with the correspondent of *The Times* at Crete?

*Mr. CURZON: How can I possibly tell that?

Captain DONELAN: Does it not appear from the telegram of the correspondent of *The Times* in the island?

Mr. FLYNN: May I ask whether it is not the fact that Admiral Reineck gives an emphatic denial to the statements in the question, and declares that he duly informed the insurgents of the message of the Admirals; and, further——

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! If the hon. Member wants an answer to that Question he should give notice of it.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT (Monmouthshire, W.): I desire to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether Her Majesty's Government have made any response to the reply received from the Government of Greece on March 8, and March 10, to the separate Identic Note presented to the Greek Government by the representative of Great Britain on March 2, which Note the right hon. Gentleman stated not to have been an ultimatum, and, if so, whether he will communicate such answer to this House?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): No answer has been made to the Note to which the right hon. Gentleman refers. The matter is under the consideration of the Powers.

Mr. JOHN DILLON (Mayo, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Greek Vice Consul and all the Greek residents have been ordered to leave Canea; and, if so, for what reason, and under whose authority has this been done?

*Mr. CURZON: Her Majesty's Consul has reported that the former Greek Vice Consul, who no longer held any official character, was residing in the Greek Consulate at Canea with certain correspondents, and that all of them had interviews and were in correspondence with the insurgents. The Greek Consulate had thus become a centre of agitation, and the Admirals on the 8th inst. invited the inmates to leave for Greece the next day, offering to convey them there if they had no means of leaving Crete. They eventually left on board a Greek man-of-war, under protest.

Mr. DILLON: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman to inform us by what right the Admirals obliged those Greek citizens to leave Canea? [*Opposition cheers.*]

*Mr. CURZON: Because acting under instructions from the Powers, the Admirals have assumed responsibility for peace and order in Canea. [*Cheers.*]

Mr. DILLON: Are we to understand that that responsibility includes the right to banish from Crete any people, without trial or investigation, whom they may think——

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! The Question on the Paper has been answered.

Mr. J. BRYN ROBERTS (Carnarvonshire, Eifion) asked whether the Admirals had made use of these people for communication with the insurgents, and afterwards expelled them?

*Mr. CURZON: No, Sir. I do not think the Admirals would be so unwise. [*Cheers.*]

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER: I beg to ask the Attorney General whether his attention has been drawn to statements in the public Press announcing that subscription lists have been opened in England for the purpose of equipping volunteers to proceed to Greece, and that many such have been already enrolled; and whether in the existing state of the relations between the Greek Kingdom and other Powers, such proceedings are in accordance with the provisions of the Foreign Enlistment Act?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir Richard Webster, Isle of Wight): My right hon. Friend was good enough to show me a letter in the Press to the purport referred to in the first paragraph of his Question. The facts were not sufficiently stated to show that any breach of the provisions of the Foreign Enlistment Act were contemplated.

METROPOLITAN POLICE (INSPECTOR FOX).

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that, at the Greenwich Police Court on the 20th February, on the hearing of a charge of larceny against one George Black, Detective Inspector Fox, of the Metropolitan Police, gave evidence of a conversation which he had had with the prisoner whilst in custody, whereupon the magistrate deprecated the practice of cross-examining prisoners, and ordered that the said evidence should be struck out of the depositions; whether this is the same Inspector Fox who, on the 14th January at the Central Criminal Court, was censured by Mr. Justice Hawkins, for similar conduct in relation to a prisoner in his custody; and whether steps will be taken by the superior officer of Inspector Fox to warn him against the repetition of such conduct in the future?

SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: My attention has been called to the circumstances alluded to in the Question. There was no cross-examination of the prisoner by the Inspector as the Question suggests, and the magistrate, with whom I have communicated, acquits the Inspector of any intention to act unfairly. I do not think it my duty to take any further steps in the matter. Inspector Fox is the officer about whose conduct in another case the hon. Member questioned me last month, and I expressed the opinion that his conduct had not, in my opinion, been deserving of censure.

BELFAST LUNATIC ASYLUM (DEATH OF INMATE).

MR. MURNAGHAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether his attention has been called to the verdict of the coroner's jury recently given at Belfast at the inquest on the body of Mrs. Beggs, who died in the Belfast Lunatic Asylum; (2) whether he is aware that the eminent doctor who conducted the *post-mortem* examination found a number of her ribs and breast bone broken, and that the jury found that the bones were not broken at the time she was taken from her home to the asylum; (3) whether the doctors of the asylum had at any time, and, if so, at what date, discovered that her bones were broken; and (4) whether, considering the facts disclosed at the inquest, the Government will, in the interests of inmates of lunatic asylums, have further inquiry made into the matter?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The facts are as stated in the first and second paragraphs. The verdict of the coroner's jury was that the injuries were not received at the patient's house, and that there was no evidence to show when and how they had been received. Deceased was admitted to the asylum on the 5th January, and on the 21st January the asylum doctors discovered the injuries. An Inquiry has been held into the matter by the Inspectors of Lunatic Asylums who will forward their Report to the Board of Governors of the Asylum.

NAZIM PASHA.

MR. DILLON: On behalf of the hon. Member for South Donegal (Mr. J. SWIFT MACNEILL), I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Secretary of State has yet received official information that Nazim Pasha, the Minister of Police during the massacres at Constantinople, has been appointed Governor General of the Province of Beyrout; whether this appointment has been made under the system of reformed administration guaranteed by the Ottoman Porte; if the Secretary of State has not received official information, will he institute inquiries as to whether the appointment to this Governor Generalship of Nazim Pasha has been made, as positively stated, in the public Press; and whether in the event of the appointment having been made, the Secretary of State will direct the British Ambassador at Constantinople to make a strong remonstrance on the subject, and to insist, in the interest of the lives of the Christian population, that Nazim Pasha's appointment be instantly cancelled?

*MR. CURZON: The appointment of Nazim Pasha as Governor General of Beyrout has been officially confirmed by Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople. As I have already informed the hon. Member Beyrout is not one of the six villayets to which the scheme of October last applied. After consulting Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople Her Majesty's Government have come to the conclusion that Nazim Pasha can scarcely be held personally responsible for many of the measures supposed to have been executed under his orders, and that there are not sufficient grounds for protesting against his appointment.

MR. DILLON: Was he not at the head of the police during the frightful massacres in Constantinople, and is he now to be allowed to be Governor of a district in which Christians live? [*Opposition cheers.*]

*MR. CURZON: I believe that he was the Minister of head of the police—the exact office I do not know. But, of course, in this matter we can only act on the advice of Her Majesty's Ambassador, who, I believe, has the confidence of both sides of the House. We have consulted him, and he sees no ground for protesting against the appointment.

COUNTY COURT JUDGESHIP (COUNTY DOWN).

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can give the name of the gentleman appointed as County Court Judge for County Down?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: The appointment has not yet been completed.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS BILL (ASSOCIATIONS).

Mr. HERBERT LEWIS (Flint Boroughs): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education from what source the money required for the administrative work of the associations, intended to be constituted by the Voluntary Schools Bill, will be derived?

Sir JOHN GORST: This Question will be answered by the First Lord of the Treasury. [*Ironical Opposition cheers and laughter.*]

Mr. F. A. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the associations to be authorised under the Voluntary Schools Bill will be entitled, in drawing up schemes for the distribution of the aid grant, to insert in such schemes claims for the whole or any portion of the expenses of such associations for staff, offices, inspection, examination, or for any duties discharged by them in aiding in the administration of the Act, or whether the regulations of the Department will prohibit the application of any part of the aid grant to other purposes than the actual educational expenditure of the individual schools to which the Department after approving the schemes is to distribute the grant; and, in the latter case, whether any regulation will be made by the Department to prohibit the managers of any school receiving the aid grant, from paying, or being called upon to pay, any sum from their ordinary income towards the expenses of the associations, and disallowing any such item from the school accounts?

Mr. LEWIS: Will the right hon. Gentleman also reply to my Question? [*Laughter.*]

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: The money for working the associations will not be provided out of the aid grants, but will have to be found for the associations by those interested in the prosperity of Voluntary Schools.

Mr. CHANNING: Will the right hon. Gentleman answer the last part of my Question—whether any regulation will be made to prevent the indirect application of the grant to the expenses of the associations by a levy made upon the managers?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: The aid grant will have to be paid for the ordinary purposes of school maintenance. It cannot be diverted, as the hon. Gentleman supposes, for purposes connected with the association.

LAND COMMISSION (CLONTYGORA TENANTS).

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if the Land Commission would let the tenants of Clontygora, near Newry, know when they would hold a sitting to hear their cases listed last October?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: The cases referred to were received on and since the 13th October. A list is now being heard for the adjoining Union of Kilkeel, and when that list has been dealt with the cases referred to will be taken up.

LUNACY (ENGLAND AND WALES).

Mr. HENRY HOBHOUSE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if the promised inquiry into the causes of the increase of lunacy in England and Wales has been made, and when its results will be made known?

Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: The inquiry has been made, and the Report laid on the Table of the House. I am informed that copies of the Report will be delivered almost immediately.

COUNTY COURT RULES.

Sir ALBERT ROLLIT: I beg to ask the Attorney General whether an opportunity will be afforded to the House of discussing the proposed draft new County Court Rules, which seriously affect the interests of traders?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The operation of the Rules has been postponed till May, in order to give the County Court Judges the opportunity of considering some objections which have been raised.

IMPORTATION OF FOREIGN MANUFACTURED GOODS.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if, having regard to the serious decrease in the staple exports of British and Irish products indicated in the Trade and Navigation Returns for last month, side by side with the continued growth of the imports of like goods manufactured by foreigners, mainly from iron, cotton, and wool, and amounting to £81,679,227 for the year ending 28th February, and the consequences of this condition of affairs to British labour, he will either allow the Motion standing first on the Paper for Tuesday, 16th March, to come on, or, if the exigencies of the public service render this impossible, if he will afford other facilities for the consideration of the evil, and the remedy?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I am well aware of the interest which my hon. Friend has always taken in this question; but he will sympathise with the difficulties of a Leader of the House in finding time for discussions of this nature, and I cannot give a definite pledge on this subject.

HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS OF SCOTLAND (CONGESTED DISTRICTS).

MR. D. NICOL (Argyll): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he can state whether the Bill to deal with the £15,000 voted last year in aid of congested districts in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland will be introduced before Easter?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE: No date can as yet be named for the introduction of the Bill dealing with the sum of £15,000 set apart for the Highlands last year, and until the Bill is introduced I cannot state what provisions it will contain.

QUEEN'S REIGN (HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT).

MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether it has been determined in what way the two Houses of Parliament are to take part in the celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the accession of Her Majesty to the Throne?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: No definite arrangements upon this subject have received the assent of Her Majesty, but precedent will be carefully considered before the final arrangements are come to.

HIGHER EDUCATION (IRELAND).

MR. DILLON: On behalf of the hon. Member for South Donegal (Mr. MACNEILL), I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, having regard to the fact that on the 15th July 1889, speaking on behalf of the Government, he stated that higher education in Ireland had long been under the consideration of the Government, and that he hoped to be able to make proposals on that subject to Parliament, he can give any assurance as to the time when these proposals which have now been under consideration so many years will be submitted to Parliament?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I have nothing to add on this subject to the answer I gave on Thursday last.

ARMENIA.

MR. BRYN ROBERTS: I beg to ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs whether he has any information as to the truth of the statement made by the correspondent of *The Daily Chronicle* that an Armenian agent of the Relief Fund had been murdered immediately on his arrival in the district where he had undertaken to distribute £500; and whether Sir P. Currie would be instructed to demand the arrest and punishment of the assassin and the restitution of the money stolen?

*MR. CURZON: We have received no information about this alleged murder. It hardly seems necessary to make the suggested inquiry at Constantinople, since Her Majesty's Ambassador will certainly report at once if the newspaper announcement be correct.

PUBLIC BUSINESS.

MR. DILLON asked the First Lord of the Treasury what Supply would be taken on Friday next?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: On Friday next it will be necessary, in order to complete the financial arrangements of the year, to pass two very small Votes connected with the Army—one supplementary Vote and the other an excess Vote—and the Vote for the Navy. I shall put down the Navy Vote first.

MR. DILLON: Can the right hon. Gentleman give us any notion when the Motion to move the Speaker out of the Chair on the Civil Service Estimates will be made?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Without entering into any absolute pledge, my belief is that the most convenient course will be to move the Speaker out of the Chair on Friday week.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS BILL.

Considered in Committee.

[The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS, MR. J. W. LOWTHER, in the Chair.]

[PROGRESS, 11TH MARCH.—NINTH DAY.]

Clause 1,—

AID GRANT TO VOLUNTARY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

"(1) For aiding Voluntary Schools there shall be annually paid out of moneys provided by Parliament an aid grant, not exceeding in the aggregate 5s. per scholar for the whole number of scholars in those schools.

"(2) The aid grant shall be distributed by the Education Department to such Voluntary Schools and in such manner and amounts as the Department think best for the purpose of helping necessitous schools and increasing their efficiency, due regard being had to the maintenance of voluntary subscriptions.

"(3) If associations of schools are constituted in such manner in such areas and with such governing bodies representative of the managers as are approved by the Education Department, there shall be allotted to each association while so approved,

"(*a*) a share of the aid grant to be computed according to the number of scholars in the schools of the association at the rate of 5s. per scholar, or, if the Department fix different rates for town and country schools respectively (which they are hereby empowered to do) then at those rates; and

"(*b*) a corresponding share of any sum which may be available out of the aid grant after distribution has been made to unassociated schools.

"(4) The share so allotted to each such association shall be distributed as aforesaid by the Education Department after consulting the governing body of the association, and in accordance with any scheme prepared by that body which the Department for the time being approve.

"(5) The Education Department may exclude a school from any share of the aid grant which it might otherwise receive, if, in the opinion of the Department, it unreasonably refuses or fails to join such an association, but the refusal or failure shall not be deemed unreasonable if the majority of the schools in the association belong to a religious denomination to which the school in question does not itself belong.

"(6) The Education Department may require as a condition of a school receiving a share of the aid grant, that the accounts of the receipts and expenditure of the school shall be annually audited in accordance with the regulations of the Department.

"(7) The decision of the Education Department upon any question relating to the distribution or allotment of the aid grant, including the question whether an association is or is not in conformity with this Act, and whether a school is a town or a country school, shall be final."

*MR. LLOYD MORGAN (Carmarthen, W.) moved in Sub-section (3) after the word "managers," to insert the words "and parents of the scholars using the school and." He wished to have the parents represented on the associations, because he considered the way in which they were constituted under the Bill was most unsatisfactory. Whatever the merits of the clergy might be, they were not advanced educationalists, and their history showed them to be much more anxious to promote the interests of their Church than to forward secular education.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS (Mr. J. W. LOWTHER, Cumberland, Penrith) asked the hon. Member to explain how the representation of the parents upon the associations would be effected.

*MR. LLOYD MORGAN replied that that would be a question for the Education Department to arrange. He thought it obvious that the parents ought to be represented on these associations, because, after all, there were no people who could possibly have as much interest in the proper working of these Voluntary Schools as the parents of the children who attended them. It was a serious flaw in the Bill that the class most concerned were utterly neglected in the associations. The Amendment seemed reasonable and was sound in itself.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.) thought he might reasonably ask the hon. Gentleman whether he supposed that parents in rural districts were always to be regarded as more advanced educationists than school managers. But he did not wish to deal with the details of the hon. Member's Amendment. It would be sufficient to point out in answer to it, as well as to one or two other proposals of a similar nature, that it was open to two objections of a very diverse character. The first objection was a practical one. He did not believe it would be possible to frame a scheme by which in any tolerably sized association, embracing a considerable area and a considerable number of schools, room would be found for the representation of the parents on the managing bodies in the case of all the schools concerned. Apart from that insuperable difficulty—and he might dwell upon it much more at length—for what purpose were the associations called into existence? They were called into existence in order to advise the Department as to the allocation of the money between the various schools. Now he said deliberately that for that purpose neither the parents nor the ratepayers, nor any of the other bodies mentioned in the earlier Amendments, were calculated to give any valuable assistance to the work of the associations. He perfectly understood those who said that they should associate in the management of schools, parents or local bodies. But they were not now dealing with the management of schools. They were discussing merely the best machinery for advising the Department in the allocation of the grant. On this point what was the difficulty raised by the Opposition generally, and the Leader of the Opposition in particular? It was that when these associations were brought into existence there would be a scramble among the representatives of various schools for as much as they could get, irrespective of the general object of supporting in the most economic and efficient manner the system of education which was the true policy of the Bill. If they were going to send up parents interested, not in the general system of education, but in their own particular school or parish, then, of course, they would and must have that scramble to which hon. Gentlemen so often pointed as the rock on which the associations would split. In his opinion it would be a very great mistake to intrude into the associations persons animated, it might be, by strong local zeal for their own school.

MR. A. H. DYKE ACLAND (York, W.R., Rotherham) quite ageed that there would be difficulty in carrying out this system throughout the country, but the right hon. Gentleman would not forget that the Opposition had been excluded altogether from making proposals for the representation of parents upon the management of the schools. That having been shut out, the question now was whether the Education Department could do anything to represent the parents on these bodies. He thought some guidance might be afforded to them in the Bill for that purpose. There were many Voluntary Schools on the management of which the parents were represented at the present time. He could not agree with the right hon. Gentleman that parents' representatives in any form would be an intrusion upon these governing bodies. [*Cheers.*] It seemed to him that, if they were on the management body, they would be just as likely to do their duty by the Voluntary Schools as any other kind of managers, and just as likely to have both the interest of the single and group denominational schools at heart as any other body of managers they could find.

MR. J. HERBERT LEWIS (Flint Boroughs) pointed out that a practical scheme had been formulated for the representation of parents on the governing bodies of intermediate schools. Such representation was much more difficult to arrange than the representation of parents on elementary schools. If it was possible to arrange for the representation of parents on the governing bodies of intermediate schools, many of whom lived at long distances from the schools, surely it was equally possible to obtain a good representation of parents in connection with elementary schools. The right hon. Gentleman stated that the object of the formation of the association would be merely to advise the Education

Department. But there were other objects that the association would exist to promote besides the mere allocation of the money. For example, special teachers might be provided for the different elementary schools in the district, and the organisation of peripatetic teaching was a question to which attention had recently been paid, and which could be carried out as a useful feature in connection with elementary as well as intermediate schools. The subjects which their children ought to be taught were surely of as much interest to the parents as to the clerical managers; and if, through their representatives, they had an opportunity of exercising some influence on the decision of the association, then, he thought, that the representation of parents was a thing certain to work for the good and the advantage of the association.

*Sir JOHN LUBBOCK (London University) thought that the schools ought to be allowed to select their own representatives. There were many places in the country in which there were Voluntary Schools, not necessarily denominational, which were carried on on purpose to avoid the expense and loss of time of unnecessary elections. There was much to be said for the representation of parents on the managing bodies, but what practical object was there to be gained by having representatives of parents on these associations? There was no constituency, and no authorised list of persons who had the right to vote. The only legal power of the associations was to distribute the funds. What they had to do was to get the best representatives of schools and those most likely to bring forward the needs of the schools. He should like the Education Department to have power to nominate the inspector, even if only as assessor, to attend the meetings.

Mr. BRYNMOR JONES (Swansea, District) understood that the first step would be the creation of an association of Voluntary Schools in a certain area, the Department first of all to determine the area. After that, a certain number of Voluntary Schools in the area might combine together to form an association. When the association was formed the governing body had to be constituted; and one of the conditions laid down was that the governing body of the association was to be representative of the managers of Voluntary Schools. All that his hon. Friend proposed was that the governing body should be elected, not simply by the existing managers of the different Voluntary Schools forming part of the association, but that an element representing parents and scholars should be added. Unless the governing body of the association was to be limited in its dealing with the Department simply to the distribution of the fund, and was not to give advice on any other matter, it would, perhaps, not be a matter of vital importance whether the Committee should adopt this Amendment. But he was convinced that they would play a much larger part than the mere distribution of the grant; they would advise the Department in regard to many matters in reference to public elementary education. The Amendment would distinctly add to the value of any advice in regard to funds or any other matter which the governing body might give to the Department. He could not see any difficulty in framing a scheme to carry out the proposal. Why should not the parish meeting or the Parish Council elect two parents to be added to the Board of Management of a Voluntary School for the purpose of electing a representative on the governing body of the association?

Mr. D. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon Boroughs) referring to the argument that it would be difficult to ascertain the parents, pointed out that there was the register kept by the School Attendance Committee of the district, and the register of a school, both of which contained a full list of the parents of the children in that particular school for the time being. The same difficulty was met with in the nomination of a School Board. There was no register there; they had simply the ratepayers for the time being in the parish. The list of parents could be drawn out in the same way. The First Lord of the Treasury had said his objection was that the parents had too much interest in the management of the schools. That, surely, was a very remarkable objection. He should have thought their interest was a very strong reason why they should have representation on these associations. The same objection would obtain to the subscribers. Take the case of Liverpool. In that city the annual subscriptions amounted to £10,000, but the fees paid by the parents amounted to £11,000. Under this Bill there would not be on these associations a single representative of the people who paid the greater amount, but the subscribers would have full control. The First Lord of the Treasury objected to local interest. Surely what they wanted in respect to these associations was to enlist the sympathy of the people who had a keen interest in the school. The keener and the deeper the interest of the people, the greater their claim to representation on the board of management of the school. The right hon. Gentleman's position was altogether illogical.

MR. LEONARD COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin) said he was extremely jealous of the wording of the clause, because it confined these governing bodies to one particular class. [*Opposition cries of* "Hear, hear!"] His right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury had again and again enlarged upon the virtue of elasticity in dealing with this question, and he had followed the right hon. Gentleman in many divisions in consequence of that argument, but upon this occasion the right hon. Gentleman seemed to be falling away from that position. The governing body of the association, whose primary duty no doubt was to advise the Committee of Council as to the distribution of the grant, was to consist exclusively of representatives of the managers. That was a strict line which he thought it was very ill-advised to adopt. If they inserted the words, "other persons interested in the conduct of the schools," or "other persons acquainted with the management of the schools," they would permit the introduction of other persons who would be of great assistance even to the immediate purpose in view, and of still greater assistance if the associations were developed as it was proposed. There would be no difficulty in securing representatives of the parents upon the governing bodies, but he thought it was even more desirable there should be representatives of the teachers. [*Cheers.*] In the allocation of the funds to the different schools the teachers would possess better knowledge than even the managers. Again, the presence of a representative of the Education Department on one of these boards would be of the greatest possible value, for he would bring what no one else would bring, a knowledge of all the schools; he would be able to suggest how the funds could be distributed with the best regard to the promotion of education as a whole. Under the Bill as drawn they could not have such a thing. [The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: "Why not?"] Because the clause said the board should consist of representatives of the managers. He asked who would be the persons who would form these associations. They would be, for the most part, the Bishops and clergy of the Church of England, persons who would put the narrowest interpretation upon their powers. They would insist that "representatives of managers" meant the "representatives of managers" and nobody else, and they would exclude from the associations such men as he had named.

MR. HUMPHREYS-OWEN (Montgomery) said the right hon. Baronet the Member for the University of London held the view that there was no practical object to be attained in having representatives of the parents on the governing bodies. The right hon. Baronet could not know that, in the case of a large number of schools, while the managers were exclusively Church of England, the children in attendance were largely, in some cases wholly, Nonconformist. The result of that was very serious to the efficiency of the schools themselves. The parents felt they had no power over the instruction given in the schools, and no safeguard against intolerance being shown in the schools. The result of it all was that they cared very little about the attendance of the children in the schools. If they gave the parents a direct interest in the governing bodies they would very largely remove that difficulty. The First Lord of the Treasury had asked whether the Committee thought that the parents were such good educationists as the clergy? His experience was that the enthusiasm for education in the elementary schools came a great deal more from the parents than from the clergy, and that therefore any alteration in the clause which enabled the parents to take a practical interest in the schools would necessarily raise the standard of education. He took it that the understanding of hon. Gentlemen opposite was that the phrase "representatives of the managers" meant representatives of the managers only. [The

FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: "Not necessarily, but they must represent the managers."] He would like to know what answer the Attorney General would make to a technical lawyer who argued that the representatives of the managers meant the representatives of the managers, and did not mean the representatives of anybody else.

*MR. J. H. YOXALL (Nottingham, W.) said it was quite clear that the Education Department could not form these associations; neither could the parents or the managers. The forming of them would no doubt come from the centre of the diocese. The nucleus existed in the Diocesan Board for Inspection of Religious Knowledge. His apprehension was that funds of the schools joined in the associations would have in future to bear the whole costs of the inspection of religious knowledge, which was now borne by other people. While it was necessary for the parents to be represented some way or other, he did not see how it could be brought about in this Bill. It would be against the principle of the Bill. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. ELLIS GRIFFITH (Anglesey) said the First Lord had already told them that parents could be represented.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I did not say that.

MR. ELLIS GRIFFITH said that was his impression, but nobody could be a member of an association unless he was elected by the managers of the schools. How could a parent get on an association unless he was elected by the managers. What was the likelihood of the managers electing a parent? Indeed, their hands would be strengthened by that discussion. In the Bill of last Session the words were, "if a reasonable number of parents desire "representation" they would get it. Now they were told that it was impossible.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) thought that they wanted a little more light on this point from the Leader of the House. It was clear that parents could only become members of the association by leave of the managers; and it was also clear that there would be many cases in which the assistance of parents would be an obvious advantage. He was sorry to hear the First Lord practically say that the sole use of these associations would be to allocate the grant.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: No; I did not say that.

MR. BUXTON was glad to hear that, for the Vice President had said that these associations would have many duties to fulfil. He believed that the Bill might be so amended as to make the associations more entitled to public confidence.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said he was one who voted for some representation of the parents, but this Amendment would cut at the bottom of the whole principle involved. If one parent was elected he would naturally wish to benefit his own school. He thought the difficulty would be met by putting in the words "and others," so that he would not necessarily be a parent.

MR. SAMUEL EVANS (Glamorgan, Mid) said he believed that the association would more and more supersede private management in these schools. He quite admitted that there was a great difficulty in the way of framing a scheme for the representation of parents upon the associations, but he did not think that that difficulty was insuperable. That difficulty was, however, much increased by the fact that they did not know how the representative managers who were to serve on the associations were to be selected. Were they to be selected by the head of the diocese, and were the views of the Bishop as to who were fit and proper persons to represent the managers to regulate their selection. In his opinion the managers themselves should select their own representatives. ["Hear, hear!"] It was only by calling a meeting of the managers of a diocese, and allowing them freely to choose their own representatives that any real representation could be secured. It was said that the representatives however selected must receive the approval of the Education Department before they could serve on the association, but he should like to ask the Government how it was possible for the Department to judge whether the selected persons were or were not really representative of the managers. ["Hear, hear!"] Supposing, for instance, that the Bishop of the diocese were to select A, B, C, and D, to represent the managers on the associations, and supposing the managers were to say that those persons did not represent them, how was the Department to determine the issue so raised between the Bishop and the managers. If they knew what process was to be gone through in order to secure the due representation of the managers there would not be so much difficulty in devising a scheme for the representation of the parents on the associations. Of course the Government would be ready to meet the Amendment with the stereotyped answer that the matter must be left to the Education Department. He did not intend to argue the question, but he thought that every reasonable man would admit that if it could be arrived at in any practical way it was desirable that the parents should be represented on the associations. It was rendered all the more desirable by the course which the Government had taken in this matter. The Government said that the subscriptions must be kept up, and, therefore, from their own financial point of view the parents from whom the subscriptions were largely drawn ought to be represented. What difficulty would there be in calling a parish meeting once a year for the purpose of selecting the representatives of the parents. Assuming that no great local feeling had been aroused, it would be easy to select a respectable man who possessed the confidence of the locality to act as the representative of the parents. He could conceive of no substantial objection that could be urged aganst this Amendment, because there appeared to be no insuperable difficulty in framing some scheme by which the parents might be represented on these associations. ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. HENRY HOBHOUSE (Somerset, E.) said that he entreated the Government not to shut the door upon the representation of the parents upon the associations by the rejection of this Amendment. He thought that as far as the representation of the managers were concerned, that if they were allowed to select their own representatives they would only be too anxious to select those who really represented them. In his view, very useful representatives might be chosen outside of the management. He was in favour of admitting the words in the Amendment in the interests of justice and of economy. ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.) said that it was perfectly clear that all hon. Members who had had practical experience of elementary education held a strong opinion in favour of the principle of the Amendment, even if they did not approve of its exact terms. It was most important that they should have representatives of the parents upon the associations, because they would assist the associations in arriving at a decision whether it was worth while, in the interests of education, to keep alive certain schools by awarding them a high payment per child out of the fund, which the associations had to distribute. He knew of some denominational schools that were almost entirely supported out of the State grant. He should very heartily support the Amendment. ["Hear, hear!"]

*Mr. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Notts, Mansfield) said that the Amendment would test the sincerity of those who had lately been championing the rights of parents in regard to the choice of schools and to religious instruction. It was equally important that parents should have some rights with regard to the secular education given in the schools. It had been stated that the parents of the children did not take an interest in the schools. In order to make them take an interest in them it would be necessary to give the parents some power and responsibility in connection with the schools. ["Hear, hear!"]

Question put, "That those words be there inserted."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 109; Noes, 250.—(Division List, No. 99.)

Mr. R. W. PERKS (Lincolnshire, Louth) proposed in Sub-section (3), after the word "managers," to insert the words "and of the teachers of the said schools." He said the object of the Amendment was to secure for the teachers some share of representation on the governing bodies constituted under the clause. The teachers, he thought, could not be charged with being uninterested in the education progress of the schools. They were certainly more advanced educationally than the managers of rural Voluntary Schools. Whatever might be the relations of these new governing bodies to the Education Department, it was clear that they would not have been called governing bodies in the phraseology of the Bill if they had not been intended to govern somebody. Their government would be over the

Voluntary Schools connected with the associations in different parts of the country. When the Elementary Education Act of 1870 was passed there were only 28,000 teachers in England and Wales, but now there were between 125,000 and 135,000 elementary teachers of all grades; so that the educational constituency for whom they were asking for some share in the constitution of these governing bodies was a very large one. Of these 125,000 teachers in the country, about 70,000 were teachers in Voluntary Schools, and of these 70,000 about 55,000 were connected with the Voluntary Schools of the Church of England. These teachers had at present no right to be heard on the subject of the management of their schools. The Church of England Schools were mostly administered under trusts, which gave the teachers no voice or vote in the managing committees. The managing committee consisted usually of the clergyman of the parish, of his curates, if he should so determine, of the two churchwardens, and of certain subscribers, who must be members of the Church of England. In the case of the Wesleyan schools the teachers were in the same position, having no voice or vote in the management. In connection with the British schools the same condition of things was found, except that here if a teacher was a subscriber to the school he could be elected on the board of management. Then the teachers in Roman Catholic schools were absolutely excluded from the managing committees. The teachers were vitally interested in many of the questions that would be dealt with by the governing bodies of the associations, and in the distribution of this enormous grant of upwards of £60,000. They were at the present moment receiving very much lower salaries than were paid in the Board Schools, and if they were elected members of the governing bodies they would have very strong motives for taking care that the money voted in this Bill was used to increase the efficiency of schools in the manner indicated by the Minister of Education a few weeks ago, when he said he hoped this fund would be used for increasing the stipends of teachers and increasing the staffs. There were other duties which teachers would be in a position to discharge. They would be able to protect members of their calling against capricious and often unjust dismissal, and against the strange extraneous tasks which were often imposed upon them, and to which reference had been made more than once in the course of that Debate. These were protective rights which the teachers might justly claim to exercise in the governing bodies. The Committee had been told by the First Lord of the Treasury that the parents were not qualified to exercise the same authority as the managers exercised in their management of Voluntary Schools. Whatever might be the validity of the argument, it certainly could not be applied to the school teachers, whose representations could not fail to result in increasing the efficiency of schools. On some questions teachers would be able to give a more unprejudiced opinion than clerical managers. Take sanitary matters for example. A teacher would be the very first man to urge that better provision should be made in a school for sanitary purposes, that better buildings should be erected, that playgrounds should be enlarged, and that damp and unhealthy buildings should be superseded by others. The governing bodies would be largely clerical associations, and Members of that House—especially those who were connected with Nonconformist denominations—were entitled to ask that some counterpoise should be present in those bodies against the clerical element. The presence of teachers would provide such a counterpoise. To sum up—the representation of the teachers would be just to them; it would be likely to increase largely the efficiency of schools, and it would neutralise to some extent the probable clerical constitution of the governing bodies.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said that in answering the last Amendment he had given several general reasons for opposing it which applied not only to that Amendment, but to most of the Amendments that followed dealing with proposed additions to the representation of managers upon the associations. Those reasons it was not necessary that he should repeat, but he would add to them one which was specially applicable to this particular Amendment. However valuable were the services of the teachers in the schools, and useful as might be the experience of men who had been engaged in teaching, when information was required on the subject of the wants of the teaching class or as to special things needed in connection with the teaching in elementary schools, he could not accept this Amendment. There was this, at all events, to be said in favour of the last Amendment—that they would all rejoice to see the representatives of parents associating with the managers in the management of Voluntary Schools. No one, however, desired to see the teachers in a school associating with the managers in the management of that school, and he believed that the Education Department would decline to recognise as a manager of a Voluntary School a teacher engaged in the school. The Department would certainly refuse to permit a teacher in a Board School to continue to receive a salary if he were elected a member of the School Board. The Education Department had invariably refused to recognise a teacher in a school as a manager of that school; and he thought it would be equally objectionable that a teacher should be a member of the governing body of an association in which his school was included. These considerations constituted strong and adequate grounds for rejecting this Amendment.

*Mr. YOXALL said it was no doubt perfectly true that the Education Department would object to a teacher's becoming a member of a School Board, and the Department would rightly oppose any arrangement by which a teacher should be *ex officio* a member of the managing body of his school. But even now it often happened that a teacher was present to give advice in the capacity of assessor at meetings of school managers. In such cases he was present at the managers' request. The proposal in the Amendment was not, however, that a teacher should become a manager of his school, but that among those persons appointed by the managers to represent the schools on the governing body of the association some teachers should be found. In some existing associations of schools able teachers had been placed upon the governing body and had done excellent work. The experience which a teacher had, and his particular interest in education generally, could not but make him an admirable and most efficient member of the governing body of an association. He hoped, therefore, that the Leader of the House would consent to reconsider his opposition to the Amendment.

Mr. HOBHOUSE expressed his intention of voting for this Amendment. There was a strong opinion in various parts of the country that teachers were a valuable element on bodies of this description. ["Hear, hear!"] He was quite aware of the objection that might be urged that teachers had some pecuniary interest. But so had the managers in many of these questions, and he thought that among teachers—certainly among those likely to be chosen as the representatives of their class—men of sufficient public spirit would be found not to vote from solely sordid reasons for grants that would benefit their special pockets. ["Hear, hear!"] In two districts with which he was intimately acquainted committees were formed which included representatives of the head teachers, and, speaking from practical experience of committees of Church schools, as well as other schools, he could say that for the secular purposes of education the teachers had proved a most valuable element. ["Hear, hear!"] They often knew better than the managers what were the special needs of the schools, and if a minority of the teachers—subject to the sanction of the Education Department—were put on the governing bodies of the associations, those bodies would, he believed, be much more practical and valuable than they were likely to be if they were confined purely to representatives of the managers. ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. ACLAND remarked that the hon. Member for Somerset had a wide experience both of elementary and secondary education in his own county; he had devoted great attention to educational subjects, and he was hopeful that some Member of the Government would feel it advisable to say some few words after the announcement of the hon. Gentleman that he felt it necessary to vote for this Amendment. ["Hear, hear!"] He thought some qualifications were necessary of the assertions which had been made by the First Lord of the Treasury. The right hon. Gentleman said that nobody now-a-days desired to see teachers associated with the managers.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: If I said so, that was not my point. My point was that by the Code it was not permitted.

Mr. ACLAND said he took down the words which the right hon. Gentleman used. He would remind the right hon. Gentleman that in the course of the last 20 years or so there had been a marked and wholesome change of opinion as to teachers being represented on the management of schools. It used to be the doctrine that in their grammar schools the head master was hardly ever to be admitted to a meeting of the managers, or, if he was, he was frequently, in the case of some of the smaller grammar schools, not asked even to sit down, the whole attitude of the board of managers being that he was a mere employé, who only came in to answer a few questions, they being the experts. The Charity Commissioners, by their acceptance of modern schemes, had shown that they in their turn had begun to take a different view of this question, and the teachers or their representatives were now frequently admitted on the governing bodies of schools. ["Hear, hear!"] He could quote cases fairly similar to this where the county governing bodies, which were to be the authority in Wales under the Bill of last year, contained among their members representatives of the elementary teachers of the particular counties concerned. He could also quote cases where arrangements had been made that on the local governing bodies of schools the head master or mistress should be members for all purposes except those which directly concerned the appointment of, or the salaries or dismissal of, the head master or mistress. ["Hear, hear!"] If they went abroad and looked to the most enlightened countries they would see that great and reasonable progress had been made in the direction of providing for the representatives of the elementary and secondary teachers on the governing bodies of schools. As to the objection that the Code did not allow teachers to sit on School Boards, they might assume that the Code was not finally perfect, and the day might come when elementary education might be much more fully developed, and when teachers might sit on their educational councils in various parts of Europe. ["Hear, hear!"] The position of the Opposition was one of great difficulty. Up to the present the right hon. Gentleman had given no indication whatever that he was going to allow the Education Department to lay before the House some scheme by which they might know how these governing bodies were going to be formed, therefore they were compelled—and he thought this a great misfortune and waste of time—to raise point after point in order to see if they could give any instructions to the Department in this Bill as to the classes of persons who should be represented on the governing bodies. If they had any concession made to them indicating that the Government thought teachers should and ought to be represented on the governing bodies, and that the Education Department would prepare schemes in that dircetion and lay them before Parliament, he was quite sure it would not be necessary to debate some of these points one after another in the way they were obliged to do now. If it was urged that the proposition for the representatives of teachers was vague he replied that the proposition of the Government for the representatives of the managers was equally vague. They both stood on exactly the same footing, and as the Government insisted on having representatives of the managers, so the Opposition, in the same way, demanded representatives of the teachers. Public opinion was strongly in favour of bringing teachers in a reasonable degree on the governing bodies of schools, and he deeply regretted that this moderate proposal should be rejected. ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. JEBB (Cambridge University) wished to point out that one function, and one only, was given in the Bill to associations, and that was the function of advising the Education Department in respect to the distribution of the grant. ["Hear, hear!"] All the arguments the right hon. Member for Rotherham had used would have been perfectly in place if they had been setting up a new educational authority, and the question had been whether the teachers should have a share in the direction of the policy. For his part he recognised as much as anyone could do the claim of the teachers to have a voice in the educational policy, but the one function of advising the Department on the distribution of the grant was all that was given to the association. ["Hear, hear!"] It had been said more than once that two different views had been presented of these associations—that one moment they had been described as merely advisory bodies, and at another as new education authorities. He submitted that there was no ground for that comparison. They were advisory bodies, and advisory bodies only; and the fact that the teachers had a direct interest in the distribution of the grant seemed to him a reason not for but against their being placed on the associations; and on this simple ground he intended to vote against the Amendment. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. GEORGE LAMBERT (Devon, South Molton) observed that the hon. Member for Cambridge University, who no doubt understood something about the Bill, said that under it they were not setting up a new education authority. They had had one definite announcement from the First Lord of the Treasury, and that was that the Education Department would not allow teachers to be represented on the governing bodies, and that no teachers should be members of the governing bodies. For his part he did not see why representatives of this most influential and useful class of men as regarded educational efficiency in their localities should not be represented upon the governing bodies. If this Bill was to promote education, then those teachers who had made a special study of education should be on the governing bodies as persons who would do their best to promote education and not clericalism. For what reason should they be excluded? They had been told perfectly plainly by the First Lord of the Treasury that teachers were not to be represented, and he had argued that the Education Department should not allow a single representative of the teachers to be on the governing bodies.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I never suggested that the Education Department should prevent teachers being on the governing bodies. I used the analogy of the School Boards to show that it was in my judgment improper, or at any rate contrary to the spirit of what had been done by the Education Department hitherto, to have representatives of the teachers on those bodies.

MR. LAMBERT remarked that if in the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman it would be improper for the Education Department to allow representatives of the teachers to be on the governing bodies, of course the Education Department would be under the control of the right hon. Gentleman, or he supposed his position and influence would have weight with the Department. But it did seem to him to be a most extraordinary thing that it should be improper for gentlemen who were among the most ardent educationalists in the country, to have representatives on the governing bodies. In the case of small Voluntary Schools there were undoubted grievances, injustice being done to the teachers, who were often turned out without adequate cause, because they would not perform this or that duty which did not properly belong to their office. If representatives of the teachers were appointed on the governing bodies they would prevent such injustices being inflicted, and aid in distributing the grant so as to promote educational efficiency.

MR. JOHN MORLEY (Montrose Burghs) remarked that the hon. Member for Cambridge University had stated—very inaccurately—that these governing bodies were to do nothing but advise as to the distribution of money, and that that being so he failed to see what advantage could be conferred on these bodies by the presence upon them of representatives of the teachers. But that was not the view of the functions of the governing bodies which had been presented to the Committee. The First Lord of the Treasury on more than one occasion had expressly told the Committee, as he told the House on the First Reading of the Bill, that these bodies were not to be confined to the mere distribution of money, and that they hoped they would be able to give not merely pecuniary assistance, but assistance in many other ways. ["Hear, hear!"] Since then the right hon. Gentleman had used other language pointing in the same direction, saying that these bodies should not confine their functions to advising the Department, but should voluntarily consult together on questions of common interest to all of them, adding that he should rejoice to see them doing so and regard it as a most useful addition to their functions.

MR. JEBB: What I said was that the Bill attributed to the association only one function.

MR. J. MORLEY replied that that only showed, as they had always maintained, that the Bill was open to any number of constructions, and that it was ambiguous and vague. The hon. Gentleman was going to vote against this Amendment because he assumed that the governing bodies would be confined to the distribution of money, whereas the First Lord of the Treasury said that what the Bill meant was that they should not be confined to these functions, but would range over others much more extensive. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. HERBERT LEWIS said the hon. Member for Cambridge University, whom they were always glad to hear on education questions, had stated that the only function of the associations under the Bill was to advise the Education Department with regard to the allocation of the grants to schools. What was the greatest danger to be apprehended from the working of the associations and from the release of the present safeguards for the maintenance of voluntary subscriptions? It was that these voluntary subscriptions would be allowed in some way or other to fall off. The presence of teachers upon the associations would surely be the most valuable safeguard possible for preventing this. The teachers would make it their business to see that the money was properly expended on educational objects and not allowed to be given in relief of voluntary subscriptions. It appeared to him that the argument the hon. Gentleman had put forward for the rejection of the Amendment was really a reason entitling it to support. It was true, as the right hon. Gentleman had said, in regard to individual schools, that the Code at present prevented any representatives of the teachers sitting upon the governing body of the Board School of which the schoolmaster would be the governor. But with regard to larger bodies like these associations, the representation of teachers would be found to be a great benefit, as it had been in Wales, both with regard to elementary and intermediate education. It was an element which if introduced into these associations would tend to the promotion of educational efficiency.

MR. BARTLEY confessed to being in some difficulty as to how he should vote on this Amendment. If the chief work of the association was simply to be to recommend the apportionment of money, it seemed to him the teacher ought not to be upon it, because he was specially interested in the allocation of the money. If, on the other hand, the associations were ultimately to become really educational institutions for advising and for the general supervision and improvement of education in their respective areas, then he could conceive no persons more fitted, in fair proportions, to be on the associations than some of the teachers of the schools. ["Hear, hear!"] The real difficulty was to know the definite intention of the Government as to what the associations were really to become. If they were to become, as he should like to see them, educational authorities, he should be sorry to give a vote which would render it impossible for teachers to become members of the association. ["Hear, hear!"]

SIR HENRY FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) quite appreciated the difficulty in which the hon. Gentleman was placed as to the real meaning of the Government in regard to these associations. At one time they were to be simply bankers for the purpose of the distribution of money, and at another they were to have more important functions allotted them. But upon this question as to the scope and functions of the associations, one luminary of the Government—who had been singularly silent in the latter Debates—had spoken at great length and with great fulness, and had clearly indicated to the House, not so much his own view, but what he stated was the view of the Committee of Council on Education in reference to this question, and of the responsible head of the Department. As the right hon. Gentleman had taken no part for many evenings in the discussion of this important part of the Bill, he hoped the Committee would excuse him if he referred to what the right hon. Gentleman had said. The Vice President of the Council, in discussing the formation of these associations, said the managers

> "would have a representative on the council of the association, and in a short time a considerable amount of experience and knowledge would be gained by the associated body, which would be of enormous value to the managers of individual schools, and would teach them better methods and encourage them in a very much improved management."

That was not the distribution of money.

> "The larger the association the better would be the management and the less would be the waste."

The right hon. Gentleman defended the compulsory character of the association with considerable ability, and said:—

> "The power in the Bill to refuse the grant to schools which did not join the association would have to be pretty freely used, so that no school would remain out without a valid excuse. These associations being so formed, they would have the duty of preparing and submitting to the Department a scheme for the distribution of these grants in accordance with the terms of the Bill, so as to insure that the money would go to the schools that want it, and that it would be used by those schools for the purpose of improving education." . . . "A scheme will not only have to indicate the amountof public money which is to be allotted to each of the constituent schools, but it will also have to prescribe the purposes for which the money so allotted shall be used by the school."

[*Opposition cheers.*] One of his hon. Friends on that side of the House then asked if the schemes would be published, and the right hon. Gentleman replied:—

> "That is a detail I have not gone into, but I have no doubt the schemes will be published."

He was the only Member of the Government who had given them that hope. The right hon. Gentleman continued:—

> "May I point out to the House what these associations may recommend and what the Education Department may prescribe? They may prescribe, for instance, that schools in the area for which the association is formed shall have a sufficient number of teachers, shall have additional teachers. I am quite sure the Member for Rotherham will agree with me when I say it is impossible that there can be efficient education in any school in which the teacher is entirely single-handed. . . . The association may prescribe that in every school there shall be an assistant teacher, or at least one or more pupil teachers. They may prescribe that no school is to be kept on the minimum staff required by the Department. They may raise the level of education; and I should like to say I have often heard in this Debate Members talk about the Education Department having raised the cost of education. It is not the Education Department that has done that; it is the public opinion of the country. . . . You may raise the standard. Then you may raise the salaries. There are many schoolmasters and mistresses who are now receiving salaries far below those they ought to receive. . . . I believe many hon. Members little know the enormous strain which is put upon the teacher, sometimes the solitary, single-handed teacher, especially in small village schools. Then there is improved apparatus. There are desks; there are better seats; there are the little museums"—[*laughter*]—"of objects which go so far to enlighten and enliven children in schools; there is the apparatus now necessary for the manual instruction, which is prescribed in all the lower standards and is very much used in the schools; and finally there is the apparatus for physical exercise. Now, all those are things which the associations will recommend"—[*Opposition cheers and laughter*]—"and which the Education Department will prescribe. . . . I am quite certain that the Government—I do not know that I have a right to speak for my right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury, who is not here at present; but I can speak as far as the Committee of Council is concerned—any Amendment which really goes to secure that this State aid grant shall be used really for the purpose of promoting and improving the education of the country will be welcomed by the Government."

[*Opposition cheers.*] He thought nobody in that House could doubt, whatever the vague and unintelligible phraseology of this Bill might mean, the intention of the Government, as expounded by the First Lord of the Treasury, in the speeches which his right hon. Friend had quoted, and in the more complete exposition of his views given by the Vice President of the Council, was that these associations should be of some practical value in improving the education of the country, that they should have at once both responsibility and power, and that they should enforce their decisions by the appropriation of a large sum of public money. They wished that these schemes should be laid before Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman just now pleaded the code, but they asked that this should be put into the code which came before Parliament once a year. They asked that Parliament should have some opportunity of seeing whether the promises and intentions of the Government were faithfully carried out, and that the educational needs of the country were fully supplied. They were quite willing that this should be as elastic as possible. He urged the Government that these bodies should be, educationally, as strong as it was possible to be.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said the right hon. Gentleman appeared to have forgotten that there was nothing in the phraseology of this Bill which would prevent the teachers being upon the associations. In the code, however, there was a provision preventing teachers being on the management of Board Schools. The elasticity of their present measure, in which there was nothing of that kind, was greater than the existing elasticity under the existing code in the case of Board Schools.

Sir H. FOWLER asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would agree to omit the words "representatives of managers?"

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY said he would certainly never willingly consent to that. [*Ministerial cries of* "Never!"] He never would consent to that. [*Ministerial cheers.*] They would be driven to leave the whole thing to the Education Department; an Education Minister might come in whose view was that the distribution of this money should be advised, not by managers of Voluntary Schools, but by County Councils, Parish Councils, or any other body which might occur to the fertile imagination of the Education Minister. The responsibility would then be watered down with the result that the function of advising the distribution, delicate and difficult as it was admitted to be, might be intrusted, not to persons who had the confidence of the managers of the schools, but to persons whose very object might be to wreck the whole system of education. [*Cheers.*] He did not say that hon. Members opposite wished it to be so, but that it might be so.

Sir H. FOWLER said he did not wish to remove the representatives of managers. He desired to add to them the representatives of teachers.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY said he must insist, and he begged the Committee would support him in insisting—["hear, hear!"]—that the body which was to advise the Education Department in this matter should be a body which from its essential constitution had the confidence of the managers of the schools. From that principle they could not depart.

Mr. BRYNMOR JONES asked the right hon. Gentleman how these governing bodies were to be created. Was it intended that the managers of Voluntary Schools were to be at liberty to elect, subject to the approval of the Department, their own representatives upon the governing bodies, or that the Department might if it liked nominate the persons who were to represent the Voluntary Schools upon these bodies? He thought the words were vague.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir Robert Finlay, Inverness Burghs) said it had already been frequently pointed out that the associations were to be voluntary. Several schools would form themselves into an association with a governing body representative of the managers. If the Education Department approved of the scheme then that association would be entitled to the advantages conferred by the first clause of the Bill. If the Department did not approve of the scheme it would be for the schools to suggest some other plan which the Department would approve.

Mr. J. W. WILSON (Worcestershire, N.) said he trusted the Committee would grant him that indulgence which was extended to every Member who spoke in the House for the first time. ["Hear, hear!"] It was clear that Members on both sides of the House expected that the associations would be able to undertake wider duties than the duty of merely advising the Education Department as to the distribution of the 5s. grant. It was, therefore, more than ever essential that the formation of those associations should be made as elastic as possible, and capable of development in the interests of education. In regard to the particular Amendment before the Committee he thought that as the Committee had rejected the inclusion of parents in the associations, teachers could not very well be included; but he appealed to the Government, in the interests of the wider use of the associations, to make the basis of the associations as wide as possible, not for the sake of overriding the schools, but for the sake of some representation of minorities. Therefore, though he could not support the Amendment he hoped the Government would see their way to make the associations as elastic as possible. It was only by that means that the associations would obtain the confidence of the country, without which they would be a failure. [*Opposition cheers.*]

Mr. ELLIS GRIFFITH said the First Lord of the Treasury had stated that the teachers might be members of the associations. The Amendment did not ask that the teachers should be members of the associations. It only asked that the teachers should form a constituency to elect members of the associations. He thought that no one could give better advice to the associations in regard to the distribution of the grant than the teachers.

Mr. SAMUEL EVANS said the First Lord had stated that there was nothing to prevent the teachers from being appointed to the governing bodies. But who would have the selection or nomination of the members of the governing body?

The SOLICITOR GENERAL replied that the constitution of the governing body was a matter for the schools which formed the association to agree upon; and it was then for the Department to determine whether it could be intrusted to carry out the Act.

Mr. SAMUEL EVANS: Then it is the managers who will have the selection of these representatives?

The SOLICITOR GENERAL: Does the hon. Gentleman consider that the parents of the children should represent the schools? Surely the managers of the schools are the proper persons. [*Cheers.*]

Mr. J. M. PAULTON (Durham, Bishop Auckland) said the interests of the teachers were largely concerned in the distribution of the grants. It was conceivable that the teachers would be called upon by the associations to exert themselves in one form or another, as the 17s. 6d. limit was to be abolished, to obtain extra grants. It was impossible to suppose that the persons who would choose the governing bodies would hold that the teachers were in any sense representative of the managers.

Mr. COURTNEY said that if they wanted to make the teaching of the schools more efficient, and if they wanted the money applied to that purpose, they must bring to the distribution of the money the advice that the teachers alone could give. His right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury escaped very cleverly from that argument in support of the Amendment by suggesting that it was meant to throw on the Education Department the absolute selection of the governing bodies. That was not what was wanted. [*Opposition cheers.*] What was wanted was that there should be representatives of the teachers on the governing bodies. [*Ministerial cries of* "No!"] That might not be the universal desire of the Committee, but many Members on the Government side had spoken in that sense already. [*Opposition cheers.*] They wanted representation of the teachers even for the mere limited purpose of the distribution of the money; but if the large benefits which every lover of education must desire were to be the outcome of this Bill, then they must certainly do their best to secure the representation of teachers. He should certainly vote for the Amendment. [*Opposition cheers.*]

Question put, "That those words be there inserted."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 126; Noes, 266.—(Division List, No. 100.)

Mr. GRIFFITH moved in Sub-section (3) after the word "managers," to insert the words "consisting as to not less than one-half of persons not clerks in holy orders." He said that the Government had repeatedly declared these associations not to be machines for the propagation of a particular creed; and the Amendment was designed to put that declaration to the test. He was not particular as to the fraction of parsons decided upon; but he suggested one-half. He wished to say nothing derogatory of clerks in holy orders, but whatever else they were distinguished for it was not love of education among the working classes. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] They had kept the Voluntary Schools going, but their primary motive had not been love of education. Their first concern had been the particular creed to which they were attached. [*Ministerial cries of* ["Oh!"] He hoped hon. Gentlemen opposite did not mean to suggest that parsons put education higher than religion, which would be a terrible thing to say, either here or anywhere else. [*Laughter.*] They were almost all agreed upon this—that the associations would be dominated in the main by the clerical element that governs the Voluntary Schools. [*Cries of* "No!"] If they were truly to represent the managers they must be clerically minded and influenced. All the Amendment asked was that at any rate half the associations should consist of persons who were not parsons. That was not very much to ask from the Government.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said he was as strong an advocate as the right hon. Gentleman himself of a lay admixture in the associations which were likely to be formed, and he had not the least doubt that a strong lay influence would be found in the associations when formed. If the hon. Gentleman would take the trouble to inquire into what was actually taking place in such associations as had already been formed for purposes similar to those of the Bill, he would find that though diocesan in their character they by no means exclusively consisted of persons in holy orders. Therefore, he thought the Amendment was directed against a danger which was in truth imaginary. Apart from that the Government were quite unable to accept an Amendment which, while putting a special disability upon clergy of the Church of England and priests of the Church of Rome, placed no corresponding disability on the ministers of any other denomination.

MR. BUXTON, referring to the objection raised by the First Lord of the Treasury in his concluding sentence, said his hon. Friend would doubtless be quite willing to alter his Amendment so as to make it apply to ministers of all religious denominations. On the general question he supported the Amendment.

MR. AUGUSTINE BIRRELL (Fife, W.) said he had not been able to comprehend all the Amendments, but he thought this an honest Amendment, framed in the interests of the Bill itself. If it could be accepted it would greatly mitigate the feelings of hostility and even of anger which the Bill was exciting in the minds of no doubt unreasonable persons—namely, the Nonconformists, who, nevertheless, were likely to continue to exist even after the Bill came into operation. The great antipathy which it excited in their minds was that it was a clerical Bill, handing over a sum of money which at no distant date would probably mount to a million a year, to clergymen meeting in diocesan assemblies. The First Lord of the Treasury hoped and believed there would be a large lay element in those new associations, but "hopes" and "beliefs" were not very businesslike terms, and he should like some security that those "hopes" and "beliefs" should be facts. Clerks in holy orders were not admitted to this august abode, though it contained persons who were more clerical than the clerics—[*laughter*]—and there was a general belief that laymen were better fitted to distribute money than the clergy. He quite agreed about the possibility of altering the Amendment, but he would point out that ministers of religion were laymen. A Nonconformist minister did not make those sacerdotal pretensions which of necessity were made by persons who called themselves clerks in holy orders. [*A laugh.*] Some of them had already discarded the preface "reverend," and those who adhered to it only did so because in the distribution of the business of this life they had functions in respect of which they had no objection to being known as "reverend," but the title was denied to them by the clergy of the Church of England. His own father was a Nonconformist minister, and many of his acquaintances who were clergy of the Church of England always made a point of addressing him as esquire—[*laughter*]—to which he had no objection, being a sensible man, and being well aware that he was not sacramentally gifted or graced in any way. [*Laughter.*] At the same time it might be said that they were not by the habits of their life very well adapted to deal with practical business matters, and he should be glad to see the Amendment extended in such a way as should secure that one-half, or some other fraction of the associations, should neither be priests nor ministers of religion. As business men the Committee should require the application of business qualities to the distribution of these funds. He appealed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say, was it not futile to leave this business to the clergy, business of which they knew very little. Did not the right hon. Gentleman think there ought to be a fixed proportion of laymen for the distribution of this money he, in an unfortunate moment, had promised to the clergy?

MR. ALFRED HUTTON (York, W.R., Morley) found an analogy to the proposal now made in the view expressed by the First Lord in reference to the establishment of a Roman Catholic University in Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman said the money could only be granted on condition that those who administered it on the governing body were composed in large proportion of laymen with a smaller proportion of clerical members. Now, if the right hon. Gentleman thought it necessary to take such precautions in a country where education was acknowledged to be conducted on purely denominational lines, then, surely, there was good reason for imposing a similar condition in regard to education in a country where the denominational system was not the only existing system. The presence of ministers of religion on the educational boards that now existed had not been attended with happy results altogether, and he had no hesitation in saying that, had ministers of all religious denominations been perforce absent from School Boards, education would have been better attended to than it had been. It was a legitimate demand to make, that the clerical element should only form a proportion on the administrating body. He could not associate with the clergy who would have places on these boards any particular faculties for conducting business and administering large sums of public money; and the fact that the right hon. Gentleman himself expressed the hope that laymen would find positions on these associations afforded no security that this would be so in time to come. No doubt a large proportion would consist of clergymen of the Church of England—it could not be otherwise; and there was every probability of their having a controlling voice in the management. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would see that, in order to clear the public mind of the idea that the Bill placed a large sum of money at the disposal of the clergy, it would be well to accept the Amendment.

Mr. PERKS said that Her Majesty's Government had refused to allow parents to be represented on these associations, had refused to allow teachers to be represented, and had now refused to give any security that the laity should be represented; so their proposal was to hand over these grants to practically clerical assemblies. It would seem that the Government claimed for their Bill something in the nature of a Divine revelation, that it was incapable of improvement, and every Amendment proposed was declared useless and unnecessary, adding nothing to the action of the Bill—a totally ridiculous and absurd assumption in the eyes of the common-sense people of the country. He had very strong objection to the ascendency of the clergy on these new educational boards. In spite of what had been said, the clergy would arrogate to themselves the control in the administration—a control detrimental to the rights of parents and the liberty of teachers. No body of men had shown themselves more incompetent and more unjust in the treatment of rural Dissenters than the Anglican clergy. Journals like the *Schoolmaster* and organs of the Union of Teachers teemed with instances of ignorance and injustice in clerical management of schools. There was a recent instance of a schoolmaster, on his holiday on the Yorkshire coast, meeting the rector of the parish in which the school was situated, and the rector expressed surprise that the schoolmaster should be away on a day appointed for choir practice. The schoolmaster, who had been in his employment for 20 years, said he thought his absence might be excused under the circumstances; but next day he received notice of his dismissal. Educational papers teemed with instances of this kind, showing that the clergy were incapable of taking a reasonable view of the administration of schools. Clerical journals, which, under present circumstances, he studied with more assiduity than usual, declared there was a compact between the Church Party and the Government that not a single Amendment should be allowed to this part of the Bill; but he protested strongly against the Government policy being tied to the coat tails of the parsons.

Mr. HUMPHREYS-OWEN was quite sure that he spoke the sentiments of a considerable number of Churchmen when he said that the despotic control of the clergy over school administration was a galling burden on parishioners. A personal friend of his, a Churchman, in a moment of exasperation said, "Oh, the Church would get on capitally if it were not for the parsons." Without going so far as that, the Amendment simply expressed the claim to have a certain amount of lay representation on these governing bodies. This was but following the tendency of the age. The whole tendency of modern education was to remove teaching from the clergy, putting it into the hands of lay teachers. A striking instance of this he found in the list of masters at one of our great public schools which contributed very largely towards the wit and wisdom of the House. Forty years ago there were 17 masters, of whom six only were laymen and 11 were clergymen; but in 1894 the number of masters had increased to 35, more than double, and in the same time the lay masters had increased five-fold—from six to 29. Yet, in the fact of what was being done in schools to which the wealthier classes sent their own sons, the Government were insisting that the children of the poorer classes should only be taught by the clergy—["No, no!"]—that the teaching should be mainly controlled by the clergy. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] Did anybody doubt that the clergy would be the chief managers in this business? And yet the men who proposed this would not have a similar system of teaching for their own children.

MR. HERBERT LEWIS said the right hon. Gentleman had admitted that it would be unfortunate if the clergy had an undue proportion of control in these associations, and the only objection he urged to the Amendment was that, in its present form, it would put the clergy of the Church of England at a disadvantage as compared with the members of other denominations. There was not the slightest desire to do that; and, to meet the point raised by the right hon. Gentleman and the views of hon. Members, he would move to add to the Amendment the words "or other minister of religion." That would completely meet the view of the right hon. Gentleman, and perhaps might induce him to accept the Amendment.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 223; Noes, 85.—(Division List, No. 101.)

Question put accordingly, "That those words be there inserted."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 87; Noes, 225.—(Division List, No. 102.)

Mr. Humphreys-Owen.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY claimed to move, "That the Question, "That the words "as are" stand part of the clause' be now put."

Question put, "That the Question 'That the words "as are" stand part of the Clause' be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 221; Noes, 83.—(Division List, No. 103.)

Question put accordingly, "That the words 'as are' stand part of the Clause."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 219; Noes, 77.—(Division List, No. 104.)

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS called upon Mr. Asquith to move the next Amendment in order, when,

MR. BRYN ROBERTS (Carnarvonshire, Eifion) pointed out that he had an Amendment upon the Paper which came before that standing in the name of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Fife.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS said the next three Amendments were in order, but they all raised, in his opinion, exactly the same point. The Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Fife seemed to him to raise the point in a better and fuller manner than the others, and it was within his discretion which Amendment he would receive.

MR. H. H. ASQUITH (Fife, E.) said he was not sanguine enough to believe that the Government were prepared to modify, even in non-essential particulars, the structure of their Bill, but if there was an Amendment which the Government could, without doing any violence either to the object or the scheme of the Bill, reasonably be called upon to accept, it was the one he was about to move. The Amendment would not in the least degree hamper the formation or the conduct of the associations which were to be set up under the clause, but merely apply to the constitution and operation of the associations the safeguard Parliament had consistently insisted upon whenever it had intrusted to the Education Department or any other body the expenditure or control of public money. In the few observations with which he was going to trouble the Committee he did not propose to travel over old ground. He would simply remind the Committee that they had two former proposals on this subject which had been rejected. They had first the proposal as to the distribution of funds and the submission of the scheme to Parliament. That Amendment was objected to on various grounds, and, among others, that it might lead to a large multiplication of schemes dealing with small details, as to which the House was not very competent to form an opinion, and that in the form in which they would be presented they might hang up the money for an indefinite time. Then, at a later stage, there was an Amendment that the constitution of these associations should be defined. That was objected to by the First Lord of the Treasury on the ground that it was not desirable to subject the forming of the associations to a series of cast-iron statutory rules—that there should be greater elasticity and greater power of adapting the schemes to each particular case. He thought that was the main ground taken for rejecting the Amendments proposed, and he had endeavoured in the Amendment he was now submitting to meet these objections and to secure for Parliament ultimate and effective control. He proposed to move, in line 16, to leave out "approved by the Education Department," and insert "prescribed by schemes made by the Education Department and published and laid before Parliament in the manner hereinafter provided." It was proposed, first, that these schemes should be published in the *London Gazette.* He could not conceive upon any principle what objection could be made to that—of giving notice at the earliest moment to the public to enable them to understand the scheme. Then he proposed that, as soon as may be after Parliament meet, or, if it was sitting, the schemes which had been published in the *Gazette* should be laid on the Table, and if either House within the next 40 days resolved that such schemes ought to be annulled, they should be of no effect. That machinery was taken from the Factory Acts. It would not interpose any unnecessary delay in the distribution of the funds if the schemes were approved. It met entirely the objection of the First Lord of the Treasury that all these associations should not be formed upon the same Procrustean model. It would allow them to adjust a scheme to each particular case. Many Gentlemen opposite would probably agree with him that these schemes should not be left to a Government Department, and that Parliament should retain the power of criticising the constitution and the operations of the body. He did not know whether it was any use making an appeal to the Leader of the House, but he did make an appeal to the common sense and the impartial judgment of hon. Gentlemen opposite whether, if their positions in that House were reversed, and a Liberal Government brought forward a scheme of this kind, placing the expenditure of large sums of money for years in this condition, they would not as one man rise in protest against Parliament being asked to abdicate its functions. The Party opposite was the Constitutional Party, as they called themselves. He did not want to say anything offensive; they were the self-appointed guardians of the Constitution. Why should they object to this Amendment? It did not alter in the least the principle of the Bill, but apparently there was not to be a word or even a comma altered. He did not take any Party view in this matter, but he contended for the time-honoured principle, in which he believed he was joined by the large majority of the Party opposite, that that House should have a voice as to the way in which this money was to be administered. If this Amendment were not carried the constitution of these associations and their areas would be such as were approved by the Education Department. What was the Education Department? ["Hear, hear!"] Or, he might say, who was the Education Department? [*Laughter.*] They were asked there, to use an expression of Lord Salisbury, to give a blank cheque. [AN HON. MEMBER: "No; of the First Lord of the Admiralty."] In whose favour was it to be drawn? Was it to be in favour of the right hon. Gentleman who was the nominal head of the Department? Was he going to be the authority under whose control these schemes were to be drawn, or were they going to witness in the administrative working of this capital Act all power taken away from him and put into other hands? [*Cheers.*] He was not drawing any invidious comparisons in connection with those into whose hands during the next two months the crucial duties of carrying out the Act would be intrusted. If that were going to be put into commission and withdrawn from the man who was nominally responsible they should have still less power of criticising and controlling these associations. ["Hear, hear!"] In conclusion, he could only say that his Amendment proposed to bring the matter into conformity with the invariable practice of Parliament, and thus provide the only effective means in the future of seeing that the money was not sqaundered or frittered away. He begged to move his Amendment.

[After the usual interval, Mr. GRANT LAWSON (York, N.R., Thirsk) took the Chair.]

MR. HENRY BROADHURST (Leicester) observed that if hon. Members on his side of the House hesitated to rise to continue the Debate before the Chairman left the Chair, it was because they expected that the Leader of the House would at once reply to the speech of the right hon. Member for East Fife. They did not realise at once the condition of mental paralysis into which the Members of the Government had been thrown by the conclusive and unanswerable arguments of his right hon. Friend. [*A laugh.*] The Amendment was a very moderate one, and was based on the constitutional principle that Parliament should retain some control over the expenditure of public money. He admitted that the Parliamentary control here designated was not the kind of control which hon. Members on his side of the House thought best, but it would, at any rate, supply some semblance, some shadow, some pretence of an opportunity of discussing some of the many thousand schemes which, he presumed, would be prepared under this Bill. The proposal that schemes should lie on the Tables of both Houses for the usual 40 days was a highly Conservative proposal, and for that reason alone the Government ought to consider it favourably. The Opposition did not ask for this concession from any Party point of view. They had no political object or Party motive in asking for it. In fact, throughout the Debates in Committee hon. Members on his side of the House had not attempted to give a Party, political or religious colour to any of their Amendments. By whom, in the opinion of the Government, were these schemes to be controlled? Did they really intend to throw this vast work upon a body of inexperienced country clergymen and village traders, who would, in many cases, be utterly unfit to perform the work? If so, they ought to have the assistance of a Government Department, or of some other body of persons experienced in the administration of public matters. Clergymen were not suitable persons to administer this money. They were often isolated in remote parishes, where they had lost touch with the administration of public affairs and forgotten much of the experience which they gained at school and college. The Opposition therefore asked that these schemes, before being finally put into execution, should lie upon the Table of the House for the usual Constitutional period, not with a view to oppose them, not with a view to deprive men of money which they believed to be in their grasp, but in order to assist these poor country gentlemen to apply rightly the money voted, so that the greatest amount of good that it was possible to get out of it should be got out of this expenditure. The object of this and other Amendments was to improve this hastily-prepared and ill-considered Measure, and to make the plan of the Government more effective than it would be if it remained unaltered. The object was to make the Measure as beneficial as possible, and to prevent the purpose of its promoters from being nullified by ignorance, mismanagement and incapacity. At present no one knew what these associations were to be. The Opposition only asked that the schemes should be laid on the Table of the House in the usual constitutional manner, that the House might have an opportunity of approving or condemning them.

*MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS said that if Her Majesty's Government persisted in opposing the Amendment they would show more than by anything else they had done since the Bill had been in Committee that the belief, which was beginning to prevail, that they intended to resist every Amendment, however necessary or reasonable, was well founded. The Bill proposed to give immense power to the Education Department, which it ought to exercise for itself. If the Amendment were rejected Parliament would be deprived of the opportunity of knowing, in an official way, what had been the result of the exercise by the Education Department of the powers proposed to be given to them. The endowed schools schemes proposed by the Charity Commissioners were laid on the Table, that they might be amended by the House, or set aside. These schemes were small affairs in comparison with the schemes which would be framed under this Bill, which would affect extensive areas, many schools, and very important educational interests. The action of the Government in this matter showed that the party which called itself "the constitutional party" was at times guilty of the most unconstitutional conduct. In resisting the Amendment they would not only damage the interests of education, but aim a blow at the dignity and authority of Parliament. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. C. A. CRIPPS (Gloucester, Stroud) said the right hon. Member for East Fife had stated that the clause as it stood involved a new departure in Parliamentary procedure, and Parliament would, by it, devolve the control of public money upon an irresponsible body. But there was no new departure whatever, in the sense in which he used the term. Parliament already controlled the expenditure of public money for educational purposes. The conduct of the Education Department was subject to question and control by Parliament, and precisely the same principle was adopted in this Bill. Not only was there no new departure, but, on the contrary, the scheme of the Bill was that the funds should be spent in exactly the same way as all other funds voted by Parliament were expended at the present time—namely, spent by the Education Department, that body being responsible to Parliament for the expenditure. No one doubted that the functions of the new bodies would be advisory and consultative, or had suggested that their powers would include the distribution of the 5s. special grant not subject to the control of Parliament. If that had been proposed it would have been objected to by many supporters of the Government. When it was pointed out that the Bill, instead of being a new departure, followed precedent, what became of the argument of the right hon. Member for East Fife that the Government proposed a new departure which, for the first time, would put the control of funds for educational purposes out of the hands of Parliament?

MR. BROADHURST said the proposed new bodies which the Committee were then discussing would have the spending of large sums.

MR. CRIPPS: The hon. Member is entirely wrong. [*Cheers.*] They would not have the spending of a single penny. All they would have to do would be to advise and consult with the Education Department, and that Department would be as responsible to Parliament for every penny spent under the Bill as they were for the spending of the educational funds they distributed now. ["Hear, hear!"] The Education Department might take the advice of the new bodies or not. If the Education Department were left as the distributing body—and it clearly was under the provisions of the Bill—why was its responsibility one iota less as regarded those funds than as regarded the several millions it already distributed? The responsibility for the expenditure of the funds was given to a body which could really exercise it, which was not Parliament, in a case of this kind, but the Education Department, and that Department ought to be judged by the way it exercised that responsibility. The Education Department had all the official knowledge and all the means of official inquiry. He hoped the Committee would not accept the Amendment. ["Hear, hear!"]

SIR H. FOWLER said the hon. and learned Member who had just spoken had urged the Goverment to reject the Amendment, and to adhere to the framework of their Bill, so as to stamp it with that air of infallibility which no man denounced more than the First Lord of the Treasury when a certain Bill was before the House in the last Parliament. The hon. and learned Member had several times repeated that there was no new departure in the clause of the Bill under discussion. He himself regretted the tendency among Members who had not long taken part in the deliberations of the House to base their arguments on the assumption that Parliament was really incompetent to exercise the duties that belonged to it—to exercise absolute control over the distribution of public money.

[*Cheers.*] He did not know whether the hon. and learned Member had ever sat through Committee of Supply. But his whole speech was based on a false assumption of the principles upon which Committees of Supply discharged their duties. Committees of Supply existed to control public departments, and he could conceive nothing more fatal to our Constitutional system than that Parliament should vote *en bloc* a large sum of money to a Department which was to do what it liked with it. Why did the hon. and learned Member not propose this with reference to the Army and Navy, the Home Office, or the Treasury? The Education Department had no discretion in the expenditure of public money. Parliament had prescribed down to the last sixpence the mode in which the Department should spend its money. It had to make its payments uniform with regard to the fee grant and capitation grant, and variable payments as regarded the merit and earned grant. But in every case Parliament had kept power in its own hands, and the Education Department could not spend a shilling without the direct control of Parliament, which was exercised through its head. The doctrine of the hon. Member with regard to the control of Parliament over the expenditure of public money was the most unconstitutional he had ever heard.

Mr. CRIPPS said the right hon. Gentleman seemed to misunderstand him. The purport of his speech was that Parliament would have control in this as in other cases.

Sir H. FOWLER said that was the position he was contradicting. He hoped the hon. Member, his friends, and the Press—which did not seem to quite appreciate the fact—would take note that this money was not absolutely fixed by an Act of Parliament, but was to be voted annually by, and would be under the control of, the House. [Mr. Cripps: "Hear, hear!"] But the hon. Member proposed that the House should abnegate its control. There was no new departure in what his right hon. Friend the Member for East Fife proposed, but there was in what the Government proposed. If the Government had stated in the Bill how these associations were to be formed, the areas in which they were to work—if they had defined the powers with which they were to be invested, and pointed out the exact way in which the governing bodies were to be elected, he was willing to admit it would not have been necessary to propose an Amendment of this sort. It would have been sufficient to have said that such a scheme should be approved by the Education Department. But no intentions of Parliament were disclosed in the clause. If associations and schools were constituted it did not say by whom or in what manner or areas. These things were left undefined, and no two Members could say what these areas would be. They ran from a million to quite a small population. The whole evening had been occupied in discussing who were to constitute the governing bodies, and the Law Officers of the Crown gave no indication of what their construction of the clause was. An absolutely blank cheque was given to the Education Department. But if the Education Department was responsible let it draw the necessary rules and regulations, that there might not be one rule for Norfolk, another for Devonshire, and a third for Yorkshire; one rule for one denomination and another for another. Let them administratively prescribe what were to be the general lines on which the associations were to be formed, where they were to work, and what governing bodies were to be constituted to represent them. All they asked was that Parliament should have the opportunity of disapproval. He thought it extremely probable that what the Education Department would do would receive the approval of Parliament as a general rule. The hon. and learned Member said this was a new departure.

Mr. CRIPPS said the right hon. Gentleman had misapprehended him. He said that the right hon. Gentleman opposite had said that the proposal of the Government was a new departure, but that it was not.

Sir H. FOWLER said he had heard the hon. and learned Member say with repeated emphasis that his right hon. Friend was wrong in saying this was a new departure, but he had waited in vain for him to give an illustration from any Act of Parliament by which Parliament had delegated such powers before and at the same time abdicated its own. There was no such precedent in the Welsh Intermediate Act, in all the schemes of the endowed schools, or in all the succession of Education Acts. If the right hon.

Gentleman opposite was perfectly impervious upon this point, if no one else did, he should put down a clause to see whether he would follow the *ipsissima verba* of the Act of 1876. It was no good attempting to throw dust in each others' eyes. [*Cheers.*] What was the real reason why all Amendments were refused? [*Cheers.*] Why was this Bill to be stamped with the infallibility of inspiration, and to be laid on the Table of the House like the two tables of stone from the Mount, which were incapable of improvement or alteration? It was one of the most impracticable ideas of Parliamentary controversy that something was to be saved by avoiding the Report stage of this Bill. He had had some little experience of fighting on both sides of the House as to Bills of a contested character, and he did not shrink from saying that the right hon. Gentleman had lost more time already than the Report stage would have taken by the impression he had given, but which he hoped was unfounded, that there was an attempt to avoid the legitimate stage of review of Amendments made to the Bill. He was satisfied the right hon. Gentleman was not gaining time, and a great deal of time had been wasted—[*Ministerial cheers*]—he said that advisedly—by the action of the First Lord of the Treasury. [*Opposition cheers.*] If, in the language which had been addressed to himself two or three years ago, the right hon. Gentleman had wanted to facilitate the progress of the Bill, the Government would have shown themselves ready to accept Amendments and shown themselves conciliatory towards the Opposition. If the right hon. Gentleman had met them in that spirit they should by that time have very nearly emerged from those portions of the Bill which were controversial and Party, and got to those sections which were purely administrative, and in regard to which, after the principle had been once declared, he thought that side of the House would have joined with the other in endeavouring to make good and efficient. They had been met, however, in a totally different spirit—with no argument—[*Ministerial cries of* "Oh!"]—and with an absolute negative. Here was an Amendment moved on high grounds by his right hon. Friend the Member for Fife, who, he thought, was not guilty of wasting the time of the House on frivolous Amendments, and no notice was taken of it. The Chairman was on the point of putting the Question without a word having been said in reply, and would have done so if the Debate had not been kept up on that side of the House. That was a course which was, he thought, as unprecedented as it was unwise. He supposed it was useless to appeal to the Government to listen to any Amendment, but he must record his protest not only against the manner in which this Bill was being conducted, but against the unconstitutional manner of the procedure which was being adopted. [*Cheers.*]

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY said he did not propose to occupy the Committee at any length with discussing that portion of the right hon. Gentleman's speech which dealt with the method the Government had adopted in dealing with the Amendments which had been put forward during the eight or nine, or more, Parliamentary nights which had already been occupied. The right hon. Gentleman had taunted them with not adopting any Amendment in order that they might escape the Report stage. He frankly admitted that, after his experience of the Committee stage, he had no passionate desire to go through the same thing on the Report stage. [*Laughter.*] He must honestly and sincerely say to the Committee, and to anybody else who cared to hear the avowal, that there had not been a single Amendment proposed on the other side which, in his judgment, and exercising such an impartial estimate as he was capable of forming—[*ironical Opposition cheers*]—which would have been an improvement to the Bill. [*Ministerial cheers.*] Hon. Members opposite might think he was not a fair judge. [*Opposition cheers.*] Very likely; but, after all, he could only judge to the best of his ability—["hear, hear!"]—and hon. Members opposite would hardly expect him to take their opinion as conclusive upon so interesting a subject. His experience in conducting opposed Bills of all sorts through that House was not inconsiderable—he did not think it fell short even of that of the right hon. Gentleman who sat opposite, and who had with conspicuous ability dealt with a very great Measure in that House. His own experience was that there were Bills in regard to which something was gained even by yielding their better judgment to the Opposition, and by accepting what they thought a worse form of words, rather than adhering to their own, and that without much detriment to the symmetry of the Statute Book. There were other Bills in regard to which concession was only regarded as a mark of weakness on the part of the Government—[*cheers*]—and was only treated as a new vantage ground for obstruction. [*Cheers.*] In which of those categories that Bill fell he left it to the impartial spectators of their Debate, if such there were, to form judgment. Though he should certainly not resist an Amendment to this Bill which he regarded as an improvement, he must honestly confess that he thought nothing would be gained in the progress of business by substituting what they regarded as an inferior, or even equal, form of words for those they had themselves devised. He would pass from that episodical matter and come direct to the merits of the Amendment. If the Amendment were passed it would lie with the Education Department to initiate the form of the scheme which each of those associations was to adopt. Under the Bill in all probability the initiative in regard to the constitution of the associations would lie with the schools forming the associations. ["Hear, hear!"] The schools would form themselves voluntarily into a body; they would frame some kind of scheme for their self-government; they would lay that scheme before the Education Department; and if the Education Department were of opinion that under that scheme the association represented the managers of the schools, they would in all probability approve of it, and the association in question would rank as one qualified by statute to advise the Department. But if the Amendment were adopted all that would be changed. The Education Department would have thrown upon them, in addition to the burdens already cast upon them by the Bill, the burden of framing for each district of the country, possibly for each denomination of the country, some kind of constitution which would suit the peculiar necessities, wishes, and prejudices of the body with which they had to deal. That was a burden which he was unwilling to throw upon the Education Department. ["Hear, hear!"] But that was not the main objection to the Amendment. What would the consequences be, so far as the House was concerned, if the Amendment were passed? No one could say, with any approach to certainty, how many associations would be formed within the limits of England and Wales for the purpose of carrying out the Act; but considering that there were at least three great denominations which had a large number of Voluntary Schools in their charge, and considering the area of the country concerned, he supposed—his estimate was a mere shot—there would be 60 or 70. [An HON. MEMBER: "Five hundred."] An hon. Friend said "Five hundred." He trusted that was an over-estimate. At all events, the number must be considerable, and he could not forecast what it would be. But was the House willing to take upon itself the discussion of all those schemes which would be brought forward? There was no more intolerable burden cast upon Members of the House than the exacting and arduous work of sitting up after 12 o'clock till some indefinite hour of the morning, not at the bidding of the Government responsible to the majority of the House, but at the bidding of any single Member of the House, in order to discuss some local scheme, some matter of purely local interest. ["Hear, hear!"] Members groaned under the burden that existing legislation imposed upon them in that regard. But what would it be if every scheme of the Roman Catholic associations, the Anglican associations, the Wesleyan associations, and the "mix'em-gather'em" associations—[*laughter*]—were open to discussion in the House after midnight—["hear, hear!"]—and if any hon. Gentleman locally interested in an association had the power to require them, with their necessarily imperfect knowledge—under the conditions imposed upon them when dealing with these large subjects, week after week, month after month—to discuss the schemes brought forward by the Education Department? [*Cheers.*] He frankly admitted that there was another difficulty which tended to influence those who had the conduct of the business of the House. Were the Government to be responsible for each of those schemes? When he first entered the House, any scheme sanctioned by the Charity Commissioners or by the Education Department became, *ipso facto*, a Government Measure, and a majority was kept in the House until the question was settled. That had been altered within the past few years; but the point was revived by this Amendment, and he deprecated, on the part of the Government of which he was a Member, and also in the interest of right hon. Gentlemen opposite, who hoped some day to be in a position to form a Government, this proposed addition to the labours and responsibilities of the Government. But it might be thought that they ought not to rest their objection to the Amendment simply on grounds connected with their own personal ease and convenience. [*Opposition cheers.*] He agreed. He thought their personal ease and convenience, considering how much time they had to devote to the public service, was not a matter to be despised; but still it was not a conclusive consideration in dealing with an Amendment of that class. He therefore came to the substantial argument which right hon. Gentlemen opposite had urged in opposition to the proposal in the Bill. But in one word, the objection of the right hon. Gentlemen the Members for Fife and Wolverhampton came to this—are you going to tolerate in this Bill so violent a departure from established Parliamentary procedure as to give to a department of State uncontrolled power in dealing with the expenditure of public money? In the first place, he would observe that every year this £620,000, or whatever the sum might be required under the Bill, would have to be voted by the House of Commons. [*Cheers.*] When the money was voted, those who were responsible for it would have to answer to the House. [*Cheers.*] To say that the Department which was to answer for that expenditure was not responsible to the House was in itself so inconsistent a doctrine that he was amazed that those who advocated it should have the courage to accuse their opponents of being neglectful of constitutional tradition. [*Cheers.*] But already the House of Commons had handed over to the County Councils, with no Parliamentary control —[*cheers*]—a sum of money far in excess of that now concerned. They had at this moment practically unhampered control. [*Cries of* "No."]

Sir H. FOWLER: It is governed by statute. The destination is pointed out.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: Yes, but there is no control by this House. [*Cheers.*] In 1888 the House of Commons handed over to the County Councils, without even saying that the money was to be used for technical education—without even determining that primary matter—a far larger sum than was now being dealt with. And no later Parliament had any ordinary or constiutional opportunity of reviewing the decisions to which the County Councils might come.

Mr. LEWIS: They are the representatives of the people.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY said that if the hon. Gentleman had listened to the two speeches from his own Front Bench, he would have learnt that the question in dispute was one of Parliamentary control alone. [*Cheers.*] There was no Parliamentary control over the destination of the money given to the County Councils. It was given by one Parliament, and could not be reviewed by another; and, unlike this proposed grant, which must be voted every year, and so give the House every year an occasion of reviewing the action of the Education Department, that money was handed over to local authorities outside the control of Parliament. [*Cheers.*] If the sound constitutional doctrine were that every penny of public money was to be spent under the supervision of the House, then the Bill under discussion sinned against Parliamentary precedent incomparably less than the Government Measure of 1888. But that was not all. Though the Committee would not guess the fact from the speeches to which they had just listened, the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman did nothing whatever to absolve the House for its constitutional sin, to cure its lapse from Parliamentary precedent, to preserve the control of Parliament. [*Cheers.*] The Amendment dealt, not with the body which had to spend the money, but with the bodies which had to advise about the expenditure. It left absolutely uncontrolled and untouched the discretion of the body which had to spend the money. [*Cheers.*] Nothing could be more exquisitely absurd than to say that constitutional orthodoxy was maintained by giving Parliament control over the constitution of the associations which advised, while the control of the Department, whenever it acted against the advice of the associations and irrespective of and outside associations, was untouched. Supposing that there were 100 schools in an association, and 100 schools which, for reasons satisfactory to the Department, had refused to form an association, the former would, if the Amendment were carried, be subject to the assent of Parliament as to the constitution of their association. But if Parliament refused its assent what would happen? The schools would simply decline to form an association. There was nothing in the Bill about unreasonably refusing to form an association, though there was something about unreasonably refusing to join an association which was formed. If, with respect to a great district like Lancashire, the House of Commons were to refuse to accept the constitution of the Anglican schools' association, and if the schools were thereupon to refuse to form an association, there would be no remedy under the Bill.

Sir H. FOWLER: They would get their money all the same.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY said that they would get their money through the action of the Education Department. [Sir H. Fowler: "By the Act of Parliament."] The Amendment did not touch that. There was nothing in the Amendment to give the House of Commons control over the expenditure by the Education Department apart from associations. [Mr. Yoxall: "The Code!"] There was nothing about the Code in the Amendment.

Mr. YOXALL said that in the case supposed, the Education Department would put the conditions of the expenditure in the Code which came before Parliament year by year.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY said that the Amendment did not deal at all with the Code, and there was no ground for supposing that the expenditure would be put in the Code. The arguments for this Amendment had been entirely beside the point. The Amendment was uniformly defended on the ground that Parliament ought to control the expenditure of public money, and the Amendment did not help Parliament to do so. All it did was to throw upon Parliament a burden which it was very ill-fitted to bear—that of dealing *seriatim* with the constitution of every association—while leaving unfettered and untouched the discretion given to the Department by the Bill for the purpose of the distribution of the money. Therefore the Amendment, good or bad, did not carry out the objects of those who proposed it. It gave to Parliament no control which it would not otherwise possess over the expenditure of public money, and the Education Department was left the absolute master of the situation as far as the associations were concerned, and the absolute servant of Parliament as far as the expenditure of the money was concerned. [*Cheers.*] For these reasons, which he had given at greater length than he was accustomed to on this Bill—[*cheers and counter cheers*]—he hoped the Committee would reject an Amendment which would throw a heavy burden on the House without adding to its powers, and, while hampering the Education Department, would add nothing to the responsibility which that Department justly owed to Parliament. [*Cheers.*]

Mr. ACLAND said not one single Amendment had been proposed which, in the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, would be an improvement in the Bill. Standing as he did as the late Education Minister, he could not help saying that he wished he had the opinion on all those Amendments of the representative of education in this House. [*Cheers.*] It was, indeed, hard upon any one who had been Minister of Education, that he should be placed in this position, that the Education Minister during all these Debates was as though he were dead or had lost his seat, and that neither by argument nor appeal were they able to extract from him, the responsible Minister, an opinion on the various questions which were brought before the House on this Bill; such a situation was almost unprecedented. He hoped the First Lord of the Treasury would not consider him impertinent if he said he did not attach as much importance to his opinion as he should attach to it if it were the opinion of the Ministerial representative of the Education Department. [*Cheers.*] The argument used by the right hon. Gentleman towards the close of his speech did not seem to carry very great weight. If the Department refused to give the money to a school outside the association, that school would get no money at all. If the Department, on its responsibility, gave the money direct to a school lying outside the association, at any rate there they touched the Department and the Department alone. But what the Opposition asked was this, that, if, as they knew, the authors of the Bill desired that in almost every case a school should be brought under an association—or else it would probably be ruled out altogether as unreasonable—then the associations should be brought under the cognisance of Parliament. And, as to the argument that the County Councils were under no Parliamentary control with regard to the expenditure of the technical education money, he pointed out that that money was handed over to them because they were representative bodies. They never dared to give it except to a representative body.

*Mr. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam): Quarter Sessions to wit, before 1888.

Mr. ACLAND said the hon. Gentleman knew perfectly well, first of all, that they had got rid of quarter sessions in that connection; and, secondly, that the great grants of the present First Lord of the Admiralty when Chancellor of the Exchequer were made after the foundation of county councils. The House of Commons had a right to know to some extent what would be the nature of the bodies, which were not elected bodies, who would have the administration of the money provided by this Bill. Regulations should be made which should regulate broadly the constitution of these associations. These regulations could be put into two or three pages without the slightest difficulty. What was the Code itself? It was only a code of regulations for day schools. What was it they asked the Government to lay before the House of Commons? The regulations for the associations by whose advice or on whose sanction this money was to be voted to day schools. Therefore it would be perfectly appropriate that these matters should form part of the existing School Code. If a discussion should be raised on the subject after Twelve o'clock that would not be unreasonable. If once the regulations were discussed and searched out by the House bringing to bear its opinion upon them, and upon the Minister of the day, of course, the regulations would be modified in accordance with that opinion, and in the following year there would probably be no Debate at all. The idea of continual Debates after Twelve o'clock was a mere figment of the imagination, there would not be more discussions of the kind than there had been on the Education Code for the last 20 years, for the regulations would very soon conform to the view expressed by Parliament. Then the Committee had been told this could be done on the Estimates, that there was full power of debating every grant made by Parliament, and that the Education Department and the action of the Minister could be overhauled on Class 4 of the Estimates. But what would Members think of a proposition to abolish the Code for a like reason? Fortunately that could not be done, the law did not allow it, but such a proposal would be analogous to the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman. How would a proposal be received to discuss the educational system involving the expenditure of seven millions, on a Motion for the reduction of the salary of the Vice President? But that would be exactly on all fours with the suggestion made. The real guardianship of the seven millions was in the articles of the Code, the Code that could be and would be changed any year if there was anything unsatisfactory in it. A Debate on the Estimates could do something, but the Code could do a great deal more, and what the Committee were asked to adopt was a proposal to make the expenditure of this large sum something like an annexe to the Code, whereby the provisions for association should be brought up with the Code every year in order that Parliament should retain that constitutional power it hitherto had held.

*Mr. C. P. SCOTT (Lancashire, Leigh) thought there would be no disposition on that side of the House to press very urgently the Amendment now under discussion if it were not for the absolutely vague and unknown character of the associations to whom were to be intrusted the distribution of these large sums of money. If they knew what these associations were, as they knew, for instance, what County Councils were, if they knew how they would be called into existence, and how, approximately, they were to be composed, he should feel that there was some guarantee as to the mode in which the money was going to be expended. But there was no such guarantee. The Committee had been discussing this Bill for eight or nine nights, as the First Lord had said in a tone of reproach, but during that time they had derived uncommonly little information from the Front Bench. There had been rather more to-night, and for this he was grateful. The First Lord had opposed the Amendment on two grounds. In the first place, he said that the right hon. Member for Fife was mistaken in asserting that the Bill was contrary to Parliamentary precedent; and, secondly, he asserted that the Amendment would be ineffective for its intended purpose. When the right hon. Gentleman tried to show that the Bill was not contrary to precedent, the only precedent he was able to cite was that of the grants made to County Councils and the "drink money." It was a great pity the Councils did receive the money without control, and they would not have so received it if legislation had not miscarried, if the Government had not had a large sum of money to get rid of somehow, and then handed it over to the Councils in a lordly manner, saying, "Do what you like with it." That would not have been done but for Parliamentary exigencies, and experience of that legislation had not been satisfactory. A great many Members on both sides of the House would be prepared to admit that the expenditure of the grants referred to had been largely wasteful, and that it would have been far better if some rules had been prescribed by Parliament, some check imposed by Parliament as to the purposes to which these grants were to be devoted. As to the Amendment not being effective, as touching only the constitution of the spending bodies, and not the actual expenditure, surely, if you affect the constitution of the spending authority you go a long way towards affecting expenditure also? Every detail of this enormous expenditure all over the country could not, of course, be brought before the House, but some security could be taken that it should be properly administered, and it was just this the Amendment provided. Then it was said the unassociated schools would not be touched by the Amendment. Of these unassociated schools part would be those who refused unreasonably to associate and these would receive no money, and those who reasonably refused would receive so much per head of scholars in attendance, and the conditions might be prescribed in the Code; there would be no difficulty about that. The right hon. Gentleman said the initiation of the formation of associations would probably lie with the schools of the country, and that seemed to show that the Department was not going to direct the formation of these associations, so that the process of formation would be more chaotic, more "fluid" than had been supposed. It would be far better if the Education Department undertook this great and responsible work of brigading the schools that had to be formed into an association. They had not been told how many of those associations would be formed, and he thought it was time that the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues came to some conclusion as to how this great scheme was going to be worked. This was a question which ought not to be trifled with. The Committee ought to have received from the Government a clear statement as to the way in which the associations were to be brought into existence, how they were to be constituted, and what were the powers they were to exercise. Because no such information had been vouchsafed they demanded that Parliament should have some control in this great question. [*Ministerial cries of* "Divide!"]

MR. CHARLES HARRISON (Plymouth) rose to continue the discussion, when

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 249; Noes, 101.—(Division List, No. 105.)

Question put accordingly, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 256; Noes, 103.—(Division List, No. 106.)

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I beg to move "That the words of the clause down to the word 'at' in line 19—[" (*a*) a share of the aid grant to be computed according to the number of scholars in the schools of the association at']—stand part of the clause." [*Ministerial cheers.*]

Question put, "That the Question 'That the words of the clause to the word "at," in line 19, stand part of the clause,' be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 256; Noes, 102.—(Division List, No. 107.)

Question put accordingly, "That the words of the Clause to the word 'at,' in line 19, stand part of the Clause."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 260; Noes, 97.—(Division List, No. 108.)

MR. DILLON moved, in paragraph (*a*) Sub-section (3), after the word "association," to insert the words "and to the needs of the association." The hon. Member observed that in a subsequent Amendment he proposed to omit the words "at the rate of five shillings per scholar." The object of his Amendment, he said, was to leave to the Education Department the same discretion as between association and association as the Bill had already conferred on the Department as between school and school. A previous Sub-section set forth that the money

> "shall be distributed by the Education Department in such manner and amounts as the Department think best for the purpose of helping necessitous schools and increasing their efficiency."

When speaking on that part of the Bill the First Lord of the Treasury said that it would be a gross waste of public money if the Department were obliged to give 5s. per head to every school without regard to whether they were necessitous or not. The right hon. Gentleman also said he hoped the effect of the Bill would be that some schools would get a great deal more than 5s., some 5s., some less, and a good many nothing at all. But when, in this latter portion of the Bill, provision was made for dividing the money between the different associations which might be formed, they found the Department was deprived of discretion in allocating the money as was best, according to its judgment, to necessitous schools. He was anxious to hear on what ground the Government would justify such a departure from the principle of the Bill. Assume that the unit of this association was to be the number of schools associated, and that the average number of each association was 200 schools. There would probably be two different associations, covering the same area, belonging to different denominations. Suppose there were two associations containing each 200 schools, that in one of these associations every school was extremely necessitous, while in the other association only 50 per cent. of the schools were necessitous, half being schools which, if the Department had discretion in the distribution of the money, such as was given by Sub-section 2, would receive none of the aid grant at all. What happened, however, according to the Bill as it stood, was, that the Department had no discretion between the two associations, and therefore they could only give the poor association, with its 200 necessitous schools, the same amount that they gave to the comparatively rich association, where there were only 100 necessitous schools, and those, perhaps, not nearly so necessitous as the 200. That was a manifest injustice. There was one other point. He asked the First Lord of the Treasury the other day how the compulsory portion of the clause was to be worked with regard to the formation of an association. The objection he sought to remove by the Amendment would assume smaller proportions if it were made clear that there was to be no compulsion on any body of schools to form an association if they preferred to deal directly with the Department. In some districts, such as the City of London and the South of England, Catholic schools were extremely necessitous, and would much prefer, if left alone, to deal directly with the Department, for the simple reason that they would get more than 5s. as special aid grant, being able to show they were extremely necessitous. If it were made clear that any Catholic schools could stand out of the associations and deal directly with the Department, that would modify his views as to the inability of the Department to distinguish between association and association in considering the relative necessities of the schools.

*LORD EDMUND TALBOT (Sussex, Chichester) said that, speaking in the interests of Catholic schools, the Amendment appeared to him to strike directly at the existence of the principles on which the associations were to be formed. It was true that it appeared to favour an association composed entirely of poor schools as against associations which combined both rich and poor. But he very much doubted its practical effect. It would not materially aid what the schools in a Catholic association would already get under the Bill. This Bill in itself was not accepted by the Catholics as in any case meeting their just demands. It in no sense gave them that equality of treatment which they considered they had a right to demand. But, so far as the Bill went, it was, in the opinion of Catholics, a good Bill. There was no harm in it. For this reason they did not want to delay the Bill from passing into law, but wished it to become law as speedily as possible.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) said he wished to support the observations of the noble Lord who had just spoken. He hoped the Amendment would not be pressed to a division. The arrangements of the Bill were much more calculated to serve the interests of the Catholic body in this country generally than the Amendment, and if the matter were discussed at all it would suit the interests of Catholics much better to have the Amendment of the hon. Member for East Somerset, which dealt with the same subject-matter in a better way, and would have a better chance of success in the House, seeing the quarter from which it came. The Amendment of the hon. Member for East Mayo would not serve the interests of Catholic schools, but would militate against them. The division between the amount to be paid for the urban schools and the amount for the rural schools would enable Catholic schools to gain, to a certain extent, an advantage beyond anything the Amendment of the hon. Member for Mayo would be likely to secure for it.

And, it being Midnight, the CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS left the Chair to make his report to the House.

Committee report progress; to sit again To-morrow.

MILITARY WORKS (MONEY) BILL.

Committee deferred till Thursday.

SUPPLY [12th MARCH].

Resolution reported.

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

"That 100,050 men and boys be employed for the Sea and Coast-Guard Services for the year ending on the 31st day of March 1898, including 17,005 Royal Marines."

Resolution agreed to.

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

Ordered, that the Resolution which, upon the 15th day of February, was reported from the Committee of Supply, and which was then agreed to by the House, be now read:—

"That a number of Land Forces, not exceeding 158,774, all ranks, be maintained for the Service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland at Home and Abroad, excluding Her Majesty's Indian Possessions, during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1898."

Ordered, that leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide, during twelve months, for the Discipline and Regulation of the Army; and that Mr. Brodrick and Mr. Powell-Williams do prepare and bring it in; presented, and Read the First time; to be Read a Second time upon Thursday, and to be printed.—[Bill 161.]

FOREIGN PRISON-MADE GOODS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

MILITARY LANDS ACT (1892) AMENDMENT BILL.

Committee deferred till Thursday.

KINGSTOWN HARBOUR ROADS TRANSFER BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

LAW OF EVIDENCE (CRIMINAL CASES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

TRUSTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

As amended, considered; to be Read the Third time to-morrow.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ALDERSHOT AND FARNBOROUGH) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

SUPPLY.

Committee deferred till Wednesday.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Committee deferred till Wednesday.

ARCHDEACONRY OF CORNWALL BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

STEAM ENGINES AND BOILERS (PERSONS IN CHARGE) BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Motion for Committal to Standing Committee on Trade, &c. [17th February] further adjourned till Thursday.

LOCOMOTIVES ON HIGHWAYS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday, 30th March.

ASSISTANT COUNTY SURVEYORS (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday, 11th May.

ARCHDEACONRY OF LONDON (ADDITIONAL ENDOWMENTS) BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Second Reading [24th February] further adjourned till Wednesday, 28th April.

POOR LAW OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION ACT (1896) AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

POOR LAW OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

LEASEHOLDERS (PURCHASE OF FEE SIMPLE) (NO. 2) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday, 31st March.

CORONERS' INQUESTS (RAILWAY FATALITIES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday, 2nd April.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (1894) AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday, 1st April.

TENANT RIGHT IN TOWNS (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday, 15th April.

LICENCES (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

LICENSING EXEMPTION (HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

MOTIONS.

TOWN HOLDINGS (TENANTS' COMPENSATION).

Bill to give Compensation to occupying Tenants of Town Holdings for beneficial improvements, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Hazell, Mr. David Thomas, Mr. Field, Earl Compton, Mr. Kearley, and Mr. Channing; presented and read the first time; to be read a Second time upon Friday, 2nd April, and to be printed.—[Bill 159.]

QUARTER SESSION JURORS (IRELAND).

Bill to provide for the relief of Jurors from unnecessary attendance at Courts of Quarter Session in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by the Attorney General for Ireland and Mr. Gerald Balfour; presented and read the First time; to be read a Second time upon Friday, 2nd April, and to be printed.—[Bill 160.]

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS BILL (PROPOSED SUSPENSION OF TWELVE O'CLOCK RULE).

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY, in moving "That the House do now adjourn," said: I beg to give notice that it will be necessary, I fear, to-morrow to move the suspension of the Twelve o'clock rule. [*Opposition cries of* "Oh!"] I am sorry to have to do it, but it must be done if Members opposite are anxious to continue to develop their views at such length. [*Ministerial* "Hear, hear!"]

MR. LAMBERT: Is that for the Education Bill alone?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Only for the Education Bill.

MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS: Does the right hon. Gentleman give us notice to-night with the intention of forcing the Bill through to-morrow?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: No. I do not know whether we shall get the Bill to-morrow; but I do not mean to ask the House to sit indefinitely to-morrow.

MR. LAMBERT: Will the House sit after half-past Five on Wednesday?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: That cannot be done without a special Motion.

MR. LAMBERT: Is it the intention of the Government to make that Motion?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: This Motion is enough for the time.

House adjourned at Ten minutes after Twelve o'Clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 16th March 1897.

WORKING MEN'S DWELLINGS BILL [H.L.].

Reported from the Standing Committee with Amendments. The Report thereof to be received on Thursday next; and Bill to be printed as amended.—[No. 32.]

CRETE.

The Earl of **KIMBERLEY**: I wish to ask the noble Marquess a question of which I have given him private notice—that, is, whether he is in a position to make any statement as to the determination now come to by the Powers with regard to their course of action as to Greece and Crete?

The **PRIME MINISTER** (The Marquess of Salisbury): The only answer I can give to that question which states any act not already formally known to the House is, that instructions have been given to the Admirals for the blockade of the island of Crete. Beyond that I do not think that there is anything which corresponds with the description implied by the question of the noble Earl. It is not, perhaps, quite regular, but I may tell him that he will find an admirable statement of the policy of the Powers, though not containing any fact or many facts absolutely new, in the speeches of M. Hanotaux and M. Méline in the French Chamber—two speeches in which I heartily concur.

The Earl of **KIMBERLEY**: I may say that I have read, with all the attention they deserve, the two speeches to which the noble Marquess has referred, but I must say I should prefer to hear a statement of the policy of Her Majesty's Government from the lips of Her Majesty's own Minister rather than to learn it from the Ministers of a foreign State.

The **PRIME MINISTER**: That is quite correct, if the noble Lord has not already heard it, as I understand he has. I think the House has heard all I can give in explanation of the policy of the Powers to which Her Majesty's Government have assented. I am not aware that I have omitted anything. If I have I make apology. I have tried to state the views of Her Majesty's Government, and if I have not done so in the brilliant language of M. Hanotaux and M. Méline it is my misfortune and not my fault.

House adjourned at Half past Four o'clock, to Thursday next, a Quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 16th March 1897.

NOTICES OF MOTION.

ARMY ENLISTMENT.

Captain **PIRIE**: To call attention to the system of Enlistment and the Treatment of Recruits prevailing in the British Army; and to move a Resolution.—[*Tuesday*, 13*th April.*]

RESERVE AND DISCHARGED SOLDIERS.

Mr. **BROOKFIELD** (Sussex, Rye): To call attention to the subject of Reserve and Discharged Soldiers; and to move a Resolution.—[*Tuesday*, 13*th April.*]

QUESTIONS.

CHARITY COMMISSION.

Mr. **A. SPICER** (Monmouth Boroughs): I beg to ask the hon. Member for the Thirsk Division, as a Charity Commissioner, whether the work in connection with the Charity Commissioners' Office, especially in relation to the schemes, is in arrear, and whether the delay arises because of the insufficient staff at the office; and, if so, what steps it is proposed shall be taken in order to increase the staff?

The **PARLIAMENTARY CHARITY COMMISSIONER** (Mr. Grant Lawson, York, N.R., Thirsk): The work of drafting orders and other formal documents in the office of the Charity Commissioners has of late fallen into arrear, in consequence partly of the general increase of the business of the office, and partly of the special pressure of work arising under the Local Government Act 1894. The Charity Commissioners have accordingly applied for the sanction of the Treasury for a permanent increase of staff, and pending the consideration of this application they have sought and obtained from the Treasury permission to procure temporary assistance in the work of drafting, with the result that the arrears in question are steadily decreasing. [" Hear, hear ! "]

HORSE AND FIELD BATTERIES.

Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War with reference to the statement that every battery of Horse Artillery in the First Army Corps is fully equipped in every respect, what is meant by fully-equipped batteries; and whether such batteries possess six wagons horsed?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford): When it was stated that each Horse Artillery battery of the First Army Corps was fully equipped it was meant that the battery had in its possession its complete equipment in guns, limbers, and wagons. The wagons are not all horsed during peace; but the guns are. [" Hear, hear ? "]

Sir CHARLES DILKE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War how many horses are required for the war strength of 45 Field and 10 Horse Artillery batteries provided for, and how many are actually maintained for these batteries at the present time; what proportion of the ammunition wagons required for service with these Field and Horse batteries are horse in time of peace; and how many horses over 6 and under 14 years of age there are in the Horse and Field batteries of Royal Artillery stationed in the United Kingdom, and how many horses over five years old are attached to such batteries?

Mr. BRODRICK: The horses required for the 45 Field and 10 Horse Artillery batteries on a war footing would be 7,805. The number maintained on the peace establishment is 3,946. Twelve Field batteries have each six wagons horsed in time of peace and five Horse Artillery batteries have each four wagons horsed. The other batteries have each only one ammunition wagon horsed. The Field and Horse batteries at home have 2,148 horses over six and under 14 years of age; and there are 1,136 horses over five but under six years old. [" Hear, hear."]

Major RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether the Horse and Field Batteries on the Home establishment are up to their complement of men; and, if not, by what number are they short of the regulation strength?

Mr. BRODRICK: By the latest return the deficiency in men was 587; but, as I pointed out a few days ago, these batteries are necessarily below their establishment after they have supplied the batteries abroad with drafts.

AGRICULTURAL RATES ACT 1896.

Mr. T. G. ASHTON (Beds, Luton): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the correspondence between the Board and the Battlesden and Potsgrove United District School Board, in the county of Bedford, regarding the Agricultural Rates Act 1896; whether he is aware that, while the School Board rate of the current year amounts to £52 10s., the School Board will receive relief under the Act on a basis of a rate amounting to £5 10s. only; and whether, having regard to this hardship, the Board will take the case into favourable consideration under the powers given to them by Article III. of their Prescribing Regulations, dated 28th July 1896?

The SECRETARY to the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. T. W. Russell, Tyrone, S.): I have no reason to doubt that the facts are as stated by the hon. Member. It was intended that the grants to spending authorities should be based upon the rates raised during the year ended the 31st March 1896. In the case of the parish in question, no such rates were raised for the expenses of the School Board. The Local Government Board have, however, taken into account the rates raised by the School Attendance Committee, who were the predecessors of the School Board, The question will be considered by the Board, whether the circumstances in the present case are such that any additional grant can be made.

ALDERSHOT MILITARY PRISON.

MR. E. H. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether his attention has been called to the observation made in the last report of the medical officer of Aldershot Military Prison that crank labour is worse than useless, being detrimental to the mental and physical condition of the prisoners; and whether he will state in how many local and convict prisons respectively crank labour continues to be used?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY, Lancashire, Blackpool): I have seen this remark of the medical officer of Aldershot Prison. Productive crank labour is in use in nine local prisons; unproductive crank labour, which is being discontinued altogether, as other forms of hard labour can be found to take its place, still remains in eleven. Crank labour is a form of hard labour, and, therefore, not in use as labour in the convict prisons; it is occasionally resorted to, however, as a form of punishment.

PROCESSES FOR RENT (CO. GALWAY).

MR. D. KILBRIDE (Galway, N): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the number of processes for rent issued and decrees granted at the October 1896 and January 1897 quarter sessions held at Tuam and Galway, with amount of decree in each case; whether the County Court Judge granted a stay of execution in any case, if so, in how many, and what were the conditions of payment; and whether he will give the same particulars in connection with the same quarter sessions in the previous year?

MR. W. O'MALLEY (Galway, Connemara): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the number of processes for rent issued and decrees granted at the October 1896 and January 1897 quarter sessions held at Clifden and Oughterard, with amount of decree in each case; whether the County Court Judge granted a stay of execution in any case; if so, in how many, and what were the conditions of payment; and whether he will give the same particulars in connection with the same quarter sessions in the previous year?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds, Central): The information I have received from the Clerk of the Peace will not enable me to reply to-day to this question and the similar question of the hon. Member for the Connemara Division of Galway, and I must ask, therefore, that both questions be postponed till Thursday next.

PAUPERS (CO. GALWAY.)

MR. KILBRIDE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the number of inmates in the Tuam, Glenamaddy and Galway Poor Law Union workhouses on 1st March 1897, the number on outdoor relief, with amount so expended in these Unions on same date; and whether he will give the same particulars respectively for 1st March 1896?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The Official Returns are made up at the close of each week, and do not enable me to give the particulars sought in respect of the 1st March. For the week ended 27th February 1897, however, the number of persons in receipt of indoor relief in the three Unions named was 649, and the cost of such relief was £111 15s. 3d. For the corresponding week of 1896, the figures under this head were 678 and £109 16s. 0d. respectively. As regards outdoor relief, there were 929 persons receiving this form of relief in the week ended 27th February 1897, at a cost of £60 7s. 10d., and 961 in the corresponding week of 1896, at a cost of £57 14s. 8d.

MR. O'MALLEY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the number of inmates in the Clifden and Oughterard Poor Law Union workhouses on 1st March 1897, the number on outdoor relief, with amount so expended in these Unions on same date; and whether he will give the same particulars respectively for 1st March 1896?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: I have already explained to the hon. Member for North Galway that the Official Returns do not give the information indicated in respect of 1st March. But for the week ended 27th February, 204 persons were in receipt of indoor relief in the two Unions mentioned at a cost of £31 2s. 9d., as compared with 199 persons in the corresponding period of 1896 at a cost of £30 13s. 3d. There were 395 persons receiving outdoor relief in these Unions in the former week at a cost of £14 14s. 6d., as compared with 139 persons in the corresponding week of 1896 at a cost of £6 10s. 0d.

FAIR-RENT APPLICATIONS (CO. CAVAN).

Mr. J. P. FARRELL (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if he can state the number of applications to have a fair rent fixed at present listed from that portion of the unions of Granard, Cavan, and Bawnboy in the division of West Cavan; when and where did the last Sub-Commission sit in County Cavan; is he aware that a considerable time elapsed from the hearing of the cases till the decisions were given; and, when and where will the next Sub-Commission sit?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: The number of fair-rent applications listed from the districts referred to is 124, nearly all of which are now dealt with. A Sub-Commission Court has been at work continuously at various places in the County Cavan since the 30th September last—for instance, at Cavan on the 1st October, 5th and 14th January, and 3rd and 4th February; at Kells on the 3rd October; and at Bailieborough on the 2nd October. Arrangements have been made to announce the decisions in a number of cases heard in January and February on the 17th instant, and in the remainder of the cases heard early next month. A list for the Union of Cootehill was commenced so recently as the 11th instant, and will occupy several sittings on different dates to be notified by the Chairman of the Sub-Commission.

Mr. O'Malley.

ARMY SERVICE (JOSEPH DENISTON, 11TH FOOT).

Mr. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether, in August or September 1896, a sworn declaration was made by Joseph Deniston, late of the 11th Foot, detailing the circumstances and causes which led to his being permanently disabled by rheumatism contracted whilst serving at Portsmouth and South Africa; and whether the Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital have yet considered that declaration; and if so with what result?

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the WAR OFFICE (Mr. POWELL-WILLIAMS, Birmingham, S.): I must refer the hon. Member to my reply to him on the 17th April last, in which I said that if further medical or other evidence, proving that Deniston's physical disability was attributable to his Army service could be produced, his case would be reconsidered by the Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital. The man's own declaration has been received, but it only repeats his former statements, and as it is not supported by any medical or other evidence there has not been any case for reconsideration.

PAUPER SOLDIERS.

Sir JOHN LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether the recent Return of discharged soldiers chargeable on the poor rates of the United Kingdom, showing that in May 1896 there were 1,464 pensioners in receipt of relief, was accompanied by any explanations of the reasons why such pensioners had become inmates of workhouses or in receipt of outdoor relief; and, if so, whether such explanations can be communicated to the House?

Mr. POWELL-WILLIAMS: In no case were the reasons for Army Pensioners being in unions or in receipt of relief stated in the returns made to the War Office.

VOLUNTEERS (JOINING ALLOWANCE).

Colonel DALBIAC (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War if he will consider the advisability of extending the joining allowance, now given to officers of the Volunteer Forces, to the medical officers?

Mr. BRODRICK: The question raised by my hon. Friend has been carefully considered and it has not been thought necessary to extend the allowance to medical officers.

LAND SUB-COMMISSIONERS (OMAGH).

Mr. D. MACALEESE (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state why so much delay has taken place in the giving of decisions in land cases heard fully six weeks ago by Sub-Commissioners at Omagh, and why no visits have been made to the farms which were the subject of investigation at the Omagh sittings referred to; and, can he state when the farms will be visited and the decisions made to the farmers concerned?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: There has been no unnecessary delay in announcing the decisions in the cases referred to, nor is it correct to say that no visits have been made to the holdings, sixty of which have been inspected by the Assistant Commissioners. The decisions will be announced in the present week.

DARTMOOR CONVICT PRISON.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department upon what classes of labour at Dartmoor are prisoners convicted of felony and prisoners convicted of misdemeanour respectively employed; are prisoners of the latter class employed out of doors, and away from the prison; and is there anything, and if so what, in their dress or otherwise, to distinguish their appearance from that of felons?

Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: There is only one prisoner convicted of misdemeanour at Dartmoor. He is undergoing his period of separate confinement, and on completing it will be sent to Parkhurst. Misdemeanants are never employed out of doors at Dartmoor. There is nothing to distinguish misdemeanants in appearance from felons.

NATIONAL TELEPHONE COMPANY.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, what is the amount of money paid as royalty by the National Telephone Company for each of the following years, 1893, 1894, 1895, and 1896: and whether he is aware that no particulars of these receipts are specifically given to Parliament in the Postmaster General's Annual Report, or in any other public document?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. R. W. Hanbury, Preston): The royalty is 10 per cent., and the amounts received during the past four financial years were:—1892-3, £57,620; 1893-4, £65,443; 1894-5, £72,693; 1895-6, £81,530. The Postmaster General is aware that no particulars of these receipts are specifically given to Parliament in his annual report or in any other public document, and he does not think it necessary to select this particular item for separate publication.

INDIAN FAMINE.

Sir JOHN KENNAWAY (Devon Honiton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether, seeing that the Viceroy has stated that the whole course of operations in relief of famine must depend largely on the course of prices, he would arrange with the Indian Government to give in its weekly telegram the prices of different grains in two or three chief towns in the worst part of the famine districts, *e.g.* for Bengal, Mohkhari and Durbhanga, for Central Provinces, Jabalphur and Raipur; whether he would state the nature of the special measures to aid private trade which the Government of Bengal have been authorised to take in Behar; and, what action has been already taken to carry them out?

The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Lord George Hamilton, Middlesex, Ealing): I have asked the Government of India to add to its weekly telegram a statement of the price of the commonest food grain at one or two places in each famine-stricken province. A general account of special measures the Bengal Government proposed for stimulating grain trade in a few remote localities will be found in the famine papers which, I hope, will be presented within the next ten days. The authority for special measures was only to take effect in case of probable failure of supplies. I have learned from *The*

Bengal Gazette, received to-day, that one case of emergency has been reported in Chota Nagpur, but I am not yet able to state the precise procedure adopted by the Government to supplement the food supplies in this district.

BOILER EXPLOSION (H.M.S. "BLAKE").

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether any, and, if any, what, special provision will be made for the relatives of the two stokers (William Cotter and Daniel Yeates) who have died from injuries caused by the recent explosion on board the guardship at Queenstown?

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN, Worcestershire, E.): The Court of Inquiry reported that the death of those men was due to an explosion caused by a naked light carried by William Cotter (stoker 2nd class) contrary to the standing orders of the fleet engineer; and further, that although Daniel Yeates (the chief stoker) carried a safety lamp himself, he did not compel Cotter to do the same. Yeates being fully aware of the fleet engineer's orders, the Board of Admiralty concur in the finding of the Court. The Regulations do not permit pensions or gratuities to widows or dependent relatives of men whose death is caused by accident due to their own culpable action or negligence.

GOVERNMENT OFFICES (APPROPRIATION OF SITES).

SIR HENRY FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works (1) whether he intends, in accordance with the Report of the Select Committee on Government Offices, presented at the end of the last Session, to propose the reappointment of that Committee; and (2) if he can inform the House what progress has been made in the acquisition of the properties lying between Parliament Street and King Street, the purchase of which has been sanctioned by the Acts passed in 1895 and 1896?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. AKERS-DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's): In reply to the right hon. Gentleman's Question I have to say that I propose to move for the reappointment of the Select Committee on Government Offices at an early date. In answer to the second portion of his Question I may say that considerable progress has been made in the acquisition of the site named, arrangements to the amount of over one-third of the sum fixed in the Act of 1895 having been agreed upon between the Government and the parties interested. There will be certain arbitrations under the Lands Clauses Acts in cases where it has been found impossible to arrive at an amicable understanding.

POST OFFICE (FEMALE TELEGRAPH LEARNERS).

MR. MACALEESE: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, why there has been no examination of female telegraph learners since 1895; have several vacancies occurred since the last examination, and have those vacancies been filled up in accordance with the rules of the Civil Service; and will an examination for female telegraph learners be ordered for an early date?

MR. HANBURY: I presume the hon. Member refers to Dublin. There has been no competition there for female telegraph learners since December 1895, because the number of candidates then taken has proved sufficient for all vacancies up to the present time. The competitions are held in anticipation of vacancies, and the number of vacancies likely to occur during the six months after December 1895 was unfortunately over-estimated. There have been 17 vacancies since December 1895; 14 have been filled by the appointment of learners, 2 by transfer, and 1 by the appointment of a skilled telegraphist. These were all in accordance with the rules of the Civil Service. Although there are no vacancies at present, another competition will probably be held in the course of the next few months.

COUNTY COURT JUDGESHIP (CO. DOWN).

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can say if the Votes for the

Salary of the Chief Secretary or of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland are likely to be taken before a County Court Judge, in room of Judge Roche, is appointed for County Down?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: The salary of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland is not on the Votes. I think it is more than probable that an appointment to the County Court Judgeship for Down will be made before the Vote for my salary is taken.

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN: Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether Mr. Walter Craig has not been appointed?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: No, Sir; but in due course of time, when the appointment is made, the hon. Member will be acquainted.

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN: Has not Mr. Craig made the announcement himself that he has been appointed?

[No answer was given.]

WICKLOW PIER.

Mr. J. L. CAREW (Dublin, College Green): On behalf of the hon. Member for Dublin, St. Patrick (Mr. W. Field), I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware of the dangerous condition of Wicklow Pier and the bad state of the Harbour; and that, in consequence thereof, several cargoes were lately landed in Dublin; and whether the Government intend to give a free grant of £5,000 immediately, and lend on security £60,000 at $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent., which was the rate at which it was lent to the Egyptian Government?

Mr. HANBURY: I have no information as to the cargoes mentioned by the hon. Member. Wicklow Pier and Breakwater are quite recent works built entirely under the direction of the local Harbour Board, without any intervention by the Board of Works. Both are already in the dangerous condition described by the hon. Member, and the cost of repair is estimated at about £29,000. The Government lent the Harbour Board £6,000 in 1870, and no instalments of capital and no interest have since been paid. In 1881 and 1885 they lent a further £40,000 to construct the Pier and Breakwater in question. Early in 1895 the Treasury, while refusing a free grant, offered to wipe out the old loan of £6,000 with all its arrears, to reduce the interest on the new loan to 4 per cent., and to lend £35,000 also at 4 per cent., if the town and local Baronies would guarantee it at an average cost to the rates of $2\frac{1}{2}$d. in the £. In 1896 the Treasury offered a consolidated loan of £65,000 on the same guarantee, and to ask Parliament to sanction by legislation the wholly exceptional rate of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest, and to wipe out the old loan of £6,000. The Grand Jury were still not satisfied, and asked for $3\frac{1}{8}$th instead of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and there the case stands. The rate of $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. mentioned by the hon. Member is, he will see, not that proposed by the local authorities themselves.

ARMY REGULATIONS (BANDSMEN).

Mr. S. WOODS (Essex, Walthamstow): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War if he is aware that bandsmen connected with the regiment accept engagements at theatres and other places of amusement; and whether accepting such engagements is permissible according to the Army Regulations?

Mr. BRODRICK: Bandsmen are allowed to accept private engagements as musicians, provided their military duties are not interfered with in consequence.

BETTING HOUSES ACT ("HAWKE v. DUNN").

Sir WILFRID LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the decision given in the Queen's Bench in the case of Hawke *v.* Dunn; and whether instructions will be given to the police that the law in relation to bookmakers on racecourses as now declared shall be properly enforced?

Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: My attention has been called to this decision. Whether it will be necessary for any instructions to be issued to the Metropolitan Police in reference to it I am unable at present to say, but I shall, of course, confer with the Chief Commissioner on the subject. I have no power to issue instructions to other police forces.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY COUNCIL (TECHNICAL EDUCATION).

MAJOR BOWLES (Middlesex, Enfield): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the Local Government Board have authorised the Middlesex County Council to borrow moneys for technical education purposes to the extent of £3,150, when there is still a balance of over £11,000 unexpended of the sum received under the Customs and Excise Act for the current year for technical education purposes?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: The Local Government Board in September last authorised the borrowing by the Middlesex County Council, under the Local Government Act, 1888, and the Technical Instruction Act, 1889, of a sum of £3,150, repayable in 30 years, for the purchase of the freehold of certain buildings to be used for purposes of technical education. I am informed that the County Council authorised their Committee to carry out the work of technical education for the current year subject to the total expenditure not being more than £10,785, and that after the other claims for technical education for the year have been satisfied there would not be nearly sufficient of the £10,785 to pay the £3,150 for the Technical Institute. Independently of this, the County Council are not required to pay out of current income expenditure which is of the nature of capital expenditure, and the repayment of which can reasonably and properly be spread over a period of years. I am not aware what is the unexpended balance of the sum received under the Customs and Excise Act, but the County Council are not under any obligation to apply the whole sum received by them to technical education.

ORDNANCE FACTORIES (PENSIONS).

MAJOR BOWLES: I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office when an answer will be given to the memorial as to pensions sent in by the operatives of the Ordnance Factories in April 1895; and if he will state the reason of such delay?

MR. POWELL-WILLIAMS: May I refer the hon. Member to the reply I made yesterday to the hon. Member for West Newington, to the effect that the inquiry into this matter was still proceeding, but that a Report as regards the operatives under the War Office was expected very shortly?

PRISONERS AWAITING TRIAL.

CAPTAIN PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, having regard to the fact that in the year 1895, out of 1,825 prisoners who came for trial before the Courts in Scotland only two were detained waiting for trial for more than 14 weeks as against 199 in England, and that the longest detention before trial in Scotland was only 17 weeks against 31 weeks in England, the Government can see their way to effect such changes in the criminal procedure in England as will effectively reduce such periods of detention in the latter country with a view, if possible, to put England on a level with Scotland in that respect?

SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: The question will certainly engage the serious attention of the Government. It is not possible, however, to lay stress on the comparison instituted by the hon. Member in the question between Scotland and England. The 199 cases in England were cases of prisoners awaiting trial at assizes, and to make the comparison between the two countries complete—a comparison which is impossible with the figures at present available—it would be necessary to take into account the cases dealt with by Quarter Sessions, and also most of the indictable cases disposed of in Courts of summary jurisdiction in England.

POLICE SUPERVISION.

CAPTAIN PIRIE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the statement in the Report on Judicial Statistics 1895, that, out of a total of 358 sentences of imprisonment to be followed by police supervision passed during the year, only 13 were passed by the Judges at Assizes, while no fewer than 345 were passed by Courts of Quarter Sessions; and whether, seeing that this form of sentence increases the difficulty of discharged prisoners obtaining employment, that it also increases the class of habitual criminals, and that it is but sparingly made use of by the Judges, he will issue a circular to the Courts of Quarter Sessions, drawing their attention to the proportion of these sentences passed by them, and recommending a considerable reduction of their number in the future?

SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: Yes, Sir, my attention has been called to the point, and also to the explanation given—namely, that the offences for which this sentence is appropriate—*e.g.*, offences against property—are for the most part tried at Quarter Sessions. I do not think that any such circular as the Question suggests is necessary. The sentence of police supervision cannot increase the number of habitual criminals, since it can only be passed on persons who have already shown that they belong to that class, and no doubt it frequently enables a Judge to mitigate the severity of the sentence of penal servitude or imprisonment that he would otherwise pass.

PARISH COUNCILS AND BOARD SCHOOLS (SCOTLAND).

MR. J. COLVILLE (Lanark, N.E.): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether a circular was recently issued to Parish Councils instructing them to assess all Board Schools; and, if so, why such schools were previously exempt from the payment of local rates?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire): It is the fact that in October last the Local Government Board issued a circular to the Parish Councils bringing to their notice the state of the law in regard to exemption from assessments. In this circular it was, among other matters, pointed out that Board Schools which had in some cases been erroneously exempted were not entitled to that exemption. As the hon. Member will observe, no change has been made; and the erroneous practice was confined to some particular localities.

SYRIA AND ASIA MINOR.

MR. JAMES BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can give the House any information regarding the present condition of Northern Syria and South Eastern Asia Minor, regions in which it has been recently stated that there exists a danger of fresh massacres, and that serious alarm prevails among the Christian population?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. G. CURZON, Lancashire, Southport): As I before stated in reply to a Question from the right hon. Member, Her Majestys's Vice-Consul at Adana reported in a Dispatch the existence of a very distressing state of affairs in the district of Payas; and this report was brought by Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople under the notice of the Turkish Government. At the suggestion of the Ambassador a British ship of war will be sent to the coast near Alexandretta, to enable the Vice-Consul to visit the different ports of the district and to distribute relief.

MR. BRYCE: Has the right hon. Gentleman no more recent information with regard to affairs in the interior? My Question was really directed to that.

MR. CURZON: No, Sir. The report of which I am speaking came from Vice-Consul Massey, is dated February 6, and refers to the whole district of Payas, the sufferings of which I have described.

CHILDREN'S METROPOLITAN ASYLUMS BOARD.

MR. ERNEST FLOWER (Bradford, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that considerable dissent was expressed at the conference of Metropolitan Poor Law Guardians, held to consider the Draft Order of the proposed Sick Children's Asylum Board, from the proposed constitution of that Board; whether he has received a resolution from the London County Council recording emphatic condemnation of the proposed establishment of a new and distinct Metropolitan central authority; and whether, in view of the public expressions of opinion thus evinced, he will consent to postpone the official promulgation of a permanent order until an opportunity of discussing it has been given to the House?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I understand from the report of the proceedings at the conference referred to that the voting on the resolution to the effect that it was desirable that separate provision, such as is indicated in the draft order, should be made for special classes of children was 63 for and 15 against, and that the resolution to the effect that the Local Government Board before constituting a new board should consider whether the duties created by the new order could not be carried out by some existing authority or authorities was carried by a majority of 42 votes, 56 voting for and 14 against the resolution. The Local Government Board have been informed of the resolution which has been passed by the London County Council to the effect "that, while recognising the necessity for alteration in the present mode of dealing with the class of children referred to, the Council are of opinion that the establishment of a new and distinct metropolitan central authority for the care of a section of Poor Law children is undesirable and calculated to lead to needless expense." The Board have also received a copy of a report of the General Purposes Committee of the Metropolitan Asylums Board (which report was adopted by the managers on Saturday last) expressing their willingness to undertake the care of all or any of the classes of children referred to. The representations which have been made in favour of the managers of the Asylums District undertaking the duty in preference to the constitution of a new board of managers will receive the careful consideration of the Board. I cannot, however, give any undertaking such as that which my hon. Friend suggests.

CHECKWEIGHER (COAL MINES REGULATION ACT, 1887).

MR. WOODS: I beg to ask the Attorney-General whether he can state under which Section of the Coal Mines Regulation Act 1887, a checkweigher is prohibited from bringing an action in a court of summary jurisdiction; and under which section he is permitted to bring such action in a county court for the recovery of wages due to him?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): Section 61 of the Act mentioned limits the jurisdiction of the court of summary jurisdiction to fines and moneys and costs directed to be recovered as fines. This section does not give the court jurisdiction in the matter of checkweigher's wages. The right of the checkweigher to recover wages in the county court depends upon the general law.

SECONDARY EDUCATION.

SIR HENRY HAVELOCK-ALLAN (Durham, S.E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Government propose to deal with the question of secondary education this year, seeing that that matter was included in the Education Bill withdrawn last year, and has been omitted from the Bill now before the House?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): In answer to my hon. and gallant Friend I have to say that, as he is aware, we are engaged in one Education Bill, and have in immediate prospect another dealing with primary education. Under these circumstances there is no great hope that we shall be able to deal with the matters to which he refers in the course of the present Session.

CRETE.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any authentic information has been received as to alleged murders and mutilations of loyal inhabitants, including many women and children, by Christians in Crete: and whether a searching inquiry into such atrocities will be instituted?

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers perhaps he will allow me to ask him a Question on the same subject, of which I have given him notice, whether the attention of the Secretary for Foreign Affairs has been called to the account in *The Times*, *Daily News*, and *Standard* of the barbarous massacre by Cretan insurgents of a large number of Mussulmans, including many women and children, in the Sitia district of Crete, and especially the burning of Moslems in the mosques; and whether her Majesty's Government will arrange for the appointment of a competent international commission to inquire into and report upon these atrocities?

Mr. CURZON: Massacres would appear to have taken place on both sides. The only mention we have received of mutilation was in a telegram from the British Admiral on February 27, to the effect that several wounded or mutilated Mahomedan children had arrived at Canea. Inquiries have been made by the Consuls and naval commanders so far as circumstances permitted, and their reports will eventually be presented to Parliament. In answer to the supplementary question of my hon. Friend below the Gangway, I have read in more than one newspaper accounts of the alleged massacres in the neighbourhood of Sitia. We have not had any official confirmation of the report, but have telegraphed to Her Majesty's Consul to ask. As regards the constitution of a commission of inquiry it would, I think, be premature to state our opinion until we have received the reply of Her Majesty's Consul. But in any case the Consuls of the Powers are practically already in the position of a commission, instructed by their Governments to inquire into and report upon any events of that character.

Mr. JOHN DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked whether the statement that many mutilated Mahomedan children had been brought into Canea was made on the personal responsibility of the British Consul in Canea, or was it only made on hearsay from what someone had reported to him?

Mr. CURZON: It was not made by the British Consul at all, but the British Admiral, and I think we may be certain that he satisfied himself as to its accuracy.

Mr. DILLON thought that such a terrible statement as he had referred to should not go forth to the public without the authority on which it was made being given. [*Ministerial cries of* "Order" *and* "Oh!"] He was perfectly in order. [*Opposition cheers.*] Was the statement made on the authority of the British Admiral in Canea in reference to events in Candia, and if so, from whom did he hear the news?

Mr. CURZON: My words and the words of the Admiral are perfectly clear. He reported to us—and no doubt he was perfectly conscious of his responsibility for the statement—that wounded and mutilated Mahomedan children had arrived at Canea.

Captain DONELAN: On behalf of the hon. Member for North Cork (Mr. Flynn), I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can state what steps the Admirals of the Allied Fleet have taken to make known to the inhabitants of Crete generally the offer of administrative autonomy; and will care be taken to provide that the full meaning and signification of the concession shall be understood by the Cretans?

Mr. CURZON: I answered this question yesterday.

Captain DONELAN: On behalf of the hon. Member for North Cork (Mr. Flynn), I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Greek Admiral Reineck emphatically denies having failed to transmit to the insurgents the warning of the Admirals of the Allied Fleet, and further states that the Greek Consulate also transmitted the warning to the chiefs of the insurgents; and, under these circumstances, can the Foreign Office give an explanation of the communication sent by the British Admiral?

Mr. CURZON: I know nothing beyond what has appeared in the papers as to the denial by Commodore Reineck. No explanation is needed of the communication sent by the British Admiral, which explains itself. The Admiral reported to us what he had been told by the insurgent chiefs. There has evidently been a mistake or misapprehension somewhere, but where I have no means of saying.

Captain DONELAN: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the attention of the Foreign Office has been directed to a telegram from *The Times* correspondent at Canea, dated the 10th instant, containing the statement that the information relative to the alleged failure of Commodore Reineck to keep his engagement to convey a message to the insurgents was sent to *The Times* at the particular wish of the British Admiral; whether the intelligence contained in the telegram was correct; and whether it is in accordance with the Admiralty regulations that an Officer commanding British forces on active service should communicate information affecting the conduct of an Officer in the service of a friendly Power to a newspaper correspondent ?

MR. CURZON : I have seen the statement in *The Times*, but have no other knowledge that the information was sent to that paper at the particular wish of the British Admiral. I have previously communicated to the House the Admiral's telegram on the same subject. A question as to the Admiralty regulations does not appear to have any connection with the Foreign Office.

CAPTAIN DONELAN : Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether Admiral Harris can speak Greek, or French, or Italian ? [*Laughter.*]

[No answer was given.]

MR. DILLON : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether there is any police force now in Canea ; if there is, what is its constitution, and who controls it ; and whether the foreign forces in Canea are being used for the protection of life and property and the maintenance of order ?

MR. CURZON : We understand that the Gendarmerie Commission, consisting of English, French, and Italian members, paid off the new Gendarmerie on the 11th instant. There still remain in Canea the Mussulman Gendarmes of the old organisation, numbering 49 officers and 535 men. The object for which the foreign forces have been landed is correctly described in the second paragraph of the Question.

MR. DILLON : The right hon. Gentleman has not answered the first paragraph of my Question, in which I ask whether there is any police force now in Canea, and under whose control it is now placed ?

MR. CURZON : Yes, I have answered that Question. I said the old Gendarmerie still remains in Canea, and is under the command of its own officers.

MR. DILLON : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether a censorship of telegrams has been established at Canea ; and, if so, by whose authority it has been done ?

MR. CURZON : No, Sir, we have heard of no such censorship.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Monmouthshire, W.) : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he is now prepared to make a statement of the policy of Her Majesty's Government on the affairs of Crete ?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY : I have no statement to make to the House on the subject of the policy of the Government in regard to Crete supplementary to the facts which, I think, they already know. We have this day directed a communication to all the Powers of Europe, and, of course, it would be impossible and improper, and not to the public interest, that I should either state the terms of the communication or encourage its being debated.

EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY ACT (EAST LANCASHIRE PAPER MILL COMPANY).

*COLONEL MELLOR (Lancashire, Radcliffe) : I beg to ask the Home Secretary a Question which gravely concerns the administration of justice in cases arising out of the Employers' Liability Act, viz., whether his attention has been called to a case which occurred in the Bury County Court yesterday, and reported in the Manchester papers of this morning, where it was stated (1) that on February 8 last, a youth employed by the East Lancashire Paper Mill Company, in the town of Radcliffe, had been awarded £108 damages in the Bury County Court for the loss of a hand ; and (2) that the three men, servants of the company who gave evidence on subpœna on behalf of the plaintiff had all, within three weeks after the trial, been summarily dismissed from the company's service, without cause assigned, although one of them had worked for the company over 20 years, and another over 12 years ; and (3) that no other servant of the company was so dismissed at the time except one—a girl of 15, a sister of the plaintiff ; and whether, in an amended Employers' Liability Bill, the right hon. Gentleman could introduce a clause protecting workmen, by indemnity or otherwise, who are called upon to give evidence in a Court of law in questions arising between employers and employed ? [*Cheers.*]

*SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY : My attention had not previously been called to this case. If the facts are correctly stated in the documents which the hon. Member has shown me, a great injustice seems to have been done—[*cheers*]—

and I will make inquiries into the circumstances. It is, however, very doubtful, I am afraid, whether I shall have power to take any action in the matter. As the hon. and gallant Member is, no doubt, aware, the protection of the Witnesses' Protection Act does not extend to witnesses in Courts of law.

BOROUGH JUSTICES' CLERKS BILL.

Second Reading deferred from Wednesday, 9th June, till Wednesday, 16th June.

THE CAMERONIANS (SCOTTISH RIFLES) DISBANDMENT.

[MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.]

MR. JOHN WILSON (Falkirk Burghs) rose in his place, and asked leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely,

"the Order of the War Office for the disbandment of the 5th Volunteer Battalion—the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles)—with headquarters at Airdrie, and the refusal of the War Office either to recall that Order or to grant an inquiry into the whole circumstances."

*MR. SPEAKER asked whether it was the pleasure of the House that leave be given. [*Opposition cries of* "Yes" *and Ministerial* "No."]

The pleasure of the House not having been signified,

*MR. SPEAKER called on those Members who supported the Motion to rise in their places, and not less than 40 Members having accordingly risen,

MR. J. WILSON (Falkirk Burghs) said that before entering upon the recent events in connection with the very extreme, and what he might call peremptory step of disbanding and thus disgracing a battalion of between 700 and 800 volunteers, he would give a brief review of the history of the Battalion. The Volunteer movement, which in the year 1859 aroused so much enthusiasm throughout this country, was joined in enthusiastically at Airdrie and the district around, and four Companies were formed, and a fifth Company was raised in 1861. These five Companies in 1862 became the 4th Adminstrative Battalion, with Airdrie as its headquarters and Sir William Hozier its first commanding officer. The Battalion continued to increase under that title till 1873, when, with 12 Companies on the strength, the title became the 29th L. R. V. The 12 Companies were reduced to eight in 1877, and at this number they had continued since the Right Hon. the Earl of Home was appointed Hon. Colonel in 1866. The Battalion had the honour to attend the following: — Royal Review by Her Majesty the Queen in 1860 and in 1881; and sham fights at Polloch in 1861, Capellie in 1864-5-7, and Edinburgh in 1868; all the Brigade drills at Hamilton; regimental camp at Plains, 1888, Brigade Camp at Gailes, 1891 and 1893. The 5th V.B. Scottish Rifles had on these occasions generally the largest per centage on parade of the battalions present, and at the Brigade drills at Hamilton the Inspecting Officer specially noted that the 5th had actually, though one of the smallest battalions, the largest turn out at the Royal Review at Edinburgh in 1881. The Battalion was complimented by H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge on their dress and physique. The Battalion had always earned and been paid the capitation grants, and as an instance of that he gave the total sum earned and paid during the 12 years ending 1895, and amounting in all to £20,268, or an average of £1,689 per annum. The number of efficients returned in 12 years amounted to 9,258, or an average of 771 per annum; and of proficients 797, or an average of 66 per annum. In fact the Battalion had, throughout that long period of almost 40 years, had a first-rate record, and it was only within the last two years that any friction had taken place or any fault found. This was admitted by the Adjutant-General on January 7th 1895. What was the reason of this astounding change of front? First there was the question of ammunition. As in the case of almost all Volunteer corps, there was in connection with the 5th Vol. Battn. of the Scottish Rifles an association for rifle practice, composed entirely of members of the regiment, and established solely for the purpose of encouraging rifle shooting. Its office bearers were the officers of the regiment. The practice had been for members to obtain ammunition at a certain fixed rate to enable men to get all the practice they desired, and as many as 20,000 rounds were annually purchased in addition to the amount allowed by the Government for class firing. So long as the class firing ammunition lasted this was given, to the men, and the money obtained for that was applied to the purchase of the other ammunition required. This system was not by any means confined to the Battalion, but was well known to exist in very many other battalions where attention was paid to shooting. Up to the advent of Captain Blewitt no complaint had ever been made as to the manner in which the ammunition was used. Then, however, the Sergeant Instructor, acting under his advice, refused to give out ammunition except for class firing. The result of this action was that correspondence took place between the commanding officer and the War Office authorities, ending in Captain Blewitt being withdrawn and returning to his regiment. It was thought that matters would now go on more smoothly, but intimation was sent by the War Office that Colonel Forrest, the commanding officer, should send in his resignation. He did resign, although he had been an officer universally respected, who had served from 1878 to 1887, and 1893 to 1896. The officers being asked to nominate another commanding officer made the mistake of nominating Colonel Forrest again. That, however, he thought was a pardonable mistake, because Colonel Forrest had been a much esteemed officer, and it might well have been overlooked by the War Office. The War Office insisted upon the appointment being immediately filled up. The officer next in command did his best to get a man not only of capability but of means, but failed. The reason was the sympathy that all the officers in the district had in Colonel Forrest. Major Black was nominated on the 19th October 1896, unanimously, but up to the present time that nomination had not been confirmed by the War Office, although he understood no fault had been found with Major Black, and he had even been told that in the event of the Volunteer corps being reorganised Major Black would be again appointed. The Adjutant General, he understood, founded his reasons for not appointing Major Black more especially on a letter which was written by him on the 15th February last, in which the latter said that he could not in the meantime nominate anyone who could adequately fill the position rendered vacant by the resignation of Colonel Forrest. It had been said by the Under Secretary to the War Office that there were other circumstances which had come to light, ranging over two years, which pointed to a lack of discipline and efficiency in the corps. The War Office unfortunately did not allow its Reports to be made public, but he had seen some of them, and he had not seen anything in those Reports warranting such an extreme step as the disbandment of a battalion of seven or eight hundred men. The War Office said that the Battalion was in a bad state of discipline, badly turned out, and unsteady on parade, that the majority of the officers took little or no interest in their duties, and were unfit for their position. That was a very remarkable change in two years—all since that Adjutant came into the field. It would appear that the inspecting officer, Colonel Lynch, said one thing to the officers and another thing to the War Office. In his Report of the last inspection on the 20th June 1896, he said that "summing up, he would be very glad to report favourably on this inspection," and yet he reported to the War Office that the Battalion was unsteady, and the officers ignorant of drill and duty. The hon. Member then quoted passages from the Inspecting Officer's speech at the inspection. Was there any reason, he asked, why such a slur and disgrace should be perpetrated on 700 or 800 respectable working men in this the 60th year of Her Majesty's reign. He assured the House great indignation had been aroused throughout Lanarkshire by this affair. A great meeting was held at Airdrie the other night, and the Provost, the magistrates, and Town Council, and over 1,000 people were present, when there was universal sympathy expressed with the officers and men of the Battalion. The War Office, no doubt, was paramount in matters of discipline, but what he asked was whether Parliament was going to homologate the action of the War Office in issuing a peremptory order for the disbandment of this regiment without reason given. The fatal step was to come into force upon the 1st of April—[*laughter*]—a very appropriate day for such a foolish step on the part of the Government. He would ask the Under Secretary for War whether it was too late to withdraw the Order, or, if it was, whether he would not see that an inquiry should be held into the whole circumstances of the case. He begged to move the Motion.

*MR. SPEAKER: Will the hon. Member give me the date of the Order which he mentions?

MR. J. WILSON (Falkirk Burghs): I will, Sir.

MR. J. COLVILLE (Lanark, N.E.) seconded the motion. What the regiment desired was, that Parliament should see that, ere they were so ignominiously dismissed, after having maintained an honourable career as a regiment for so many years, they should have that meed of justice accorded to them that the humblest private in the Army had a right to claim. They asked a public inquiry into the charges brought against them; and, as they were prepared to refute those charges, he could not conceive that the House would deal unfairly with a Volunteer regiment of forty years' honourable standing. He did not approach the question in any Party spirit, but it seemed to him that the Government could not take any step more damaging to their popularity in Lanarkshire than that of permitting a regiment of 700 or 800 men to be arbitrarily dismissed without a full and complete inquiry into the charges brought against them. It ought to be remembered that, up till two years ago, this regiment had repeatedly excellent reports; but immediately on the occurrence of a private dispute between the then colonel of the regiment, Colonel Forrest—who for more than 30 years had done honour to the Volunteer service and was an enthusiastic supporter of the present Government—and the Adjutant, Colonel Forrest was called upon to resign; but so slight were the grounds upon which the War Office conceived it their duty to call upon him to resign, that he was allowed to retain his uniform. Colonel Forrest also seemed to have incurred the wrath of the inspecting officer, Colonel Lynch, and so he had not only to suffer himself, but the regiment had been called upon to share in the affront. The other senior officer who ought to have been called upon to fill the place of Colonel Forrest was a man of excellent character, of good social position, in every respect an officer and a gentleman who would do credit to any Volunteer battalion; but his appointment was refused by the War Office, and thus a further affront was, as we believe, done to the regiment as a whole. He was not there to say that the regiment was free from imperfections, or deserving of a character for excellent discipline, but as citizen soldiery they would compare favourably with any other Volunteer battalion, not only in Lanarkshire, but in Scotland. The question for the House was, whether Her Majesty's Government was so completely in the hands of one of the Departments of State that, notwithstanding the enormous majority they enjoyed in this House, they were powerless to resist the red tape and the permanent officialism of the War Office, who could condemn, without public trial, 800 men, and so put a lasting stigma upon those men and upon the district from which they came. The four parishes from which the regiment was recruited formed a very considerable portion of what might be called the black country of Scotland, and they did not feel that they were the least important of the industrial centres of the Empire. If they were to be so dealt with, there was no guarantee for any other part of the country; and in that way a great blow might be dealt at Volunteering in Scotland, and also south of the Border. He hoped the House, with its usual desire for fair play, would give to this regiment what the War Office could not refuse to the youngest drummer-boy in the Army—that was, a full inquiry, by which the men and officers would stand or fall.

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford) said he could not help feeling some regret that his hon. Friend had thought it necessary to bring this matter before the House. Any man speaking from that Bench must be reluctant to refer to any Volunteer corps in terms other than those of praise. It had been his good fortune to express on several occasions in this House the high opinion which the Military authorities entertained of the Volunteer forces of the country. ["Hear, hear!"] But this case was one which, in the opinion of the Department, was a crushing case for the disbandment of the Volunteer corps concerned; and if it became his duty to use expressions reflecting on that corps the blame must rest, not on the War Office, who were undesirous to say anything reflecting on individuals, but on his hon.

Friend who thought it necessary to bring the matter before the House. ["Hear, hear!"] On the other hand, although he was most reluctant to go into the subject, he should confess he was not sorry to have the opportunity of brushing away some misapprehensions and some misstatements which had accompanied the disbandment of this corps. His hon. Friend had circulated privately amongst some Members of the House a statement on behalf of the corps, which was full of such mistakes. The hon. Member's general case was, that here was a corps which had been in existence for nearly 40 years, which had been carried on with satisfaction to all concerned up to the last inspection, as to which the capitation grant had been fully earned, and which, the hon. Gentleman insinuated, was now the victim of a sort of conspiracy between the inspecting officer, Colonel Lynch, and the War Office. With regard to Colonel Lynch, he should say at the outset that the whole of the somewhat amusing speech which the hon. Member had read to the House and attributed to that officer was repudiated in every respect by Colonel Lynch himself, and was in variance with every account Colonel Lynch had laid before the War Office. Colonel Lynch's account of the matter was this—that, having the unpleasant task of informing this Battalion that it was inefficient and quite unfit to take its position on parade, he did not wish to censure the officers before the men, and so he called them aside to a corner of the parade ground, where he believed there was not a single reporter present, and there informed them of his opinion of the battalion. His hon. Friend read a report which appeared to have been furnished from notes taken at the time, but which were amplified afterwards according to the writer's own desires. It contained such statements as that the rifles, with the exception of one, were found clean. If Colonel Lynch were examined he would say that his remarks had been more in the direction of stating that, with one exception, the rifles were not clean. [*Laughter.*] Then, as to the salutes, it was said that Colonel Lynch had described how salutes should be done, and that he had stated it was a simple matter that required practice. Colonel Lynch reported that he could not remember his exact words, but he told the officers that if they only went before a looking-glass and saw the antics they performed in saluting they would never attempt to salute again. [*Renewed laughter.*] The following was the statement furnished by Colonel Lynch in reference to the report of his speech given in the Airdrie paper:—

"Naval and Military Club, March 8, 1897.

"Sir,—I have the honour to report for your information that my opinion of the 5th Volunteer Battalion Scottish Rifles, on parade at my inspection on June 20, 1896, was, that the Battalion was unsteady, and the men's accoutrements and arms were dirty, and the officers ignorant of drill and duty.

"I fell out the officers at a distance from the men in order that the men should not hear the censure I felt bound to express.

"The report of my remarks, as published in the papers, is very incorrect, as it conveys the impression that I was satisfied with the Battalion, when my remarks were exactly in the opposite sense. I took steps to avoid the attendance of any reporters, and to the best of my belief none were present. I stated that there was an improvement in one or two companies, but as regards the whole Battalion my remarks conveyed censure and not praise.

"I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

"Alfred Lynch, Colonel,
26-71 Regimental District.

"To the Inspector General of Auxiliary Forces, War Office."

He did not deny for a moment that the early history of the corps was very favourable. When it was commanded by the father of his hon. Friend the Member for South Lanark it had a very high reputation. But this was one of the cases in which the character of the residents of a district had a great deal changed. It was now a mining centre, and the men had changed.

Mr. JOHN WILSON (Falkirk Burghs): I beg your pardon; it is less a mining centre than it used to be.

*Mr. BRODRICK said that, at all events, the class of men, and the class also from whom officers could be drawn, had greatly changed. The men were, to a large extent, miners. Their physique was good; but they had neither the time nor the discipline, nor apparently the desire, for Volunteering. This was shown to some extent from the Adjutant's inspection. For the purposes of that inspection the Adjutant went round to the companies to see how they were drilled. Two successive Adjutants found great difficulty in that respect in regard to the present corps. The Adjutant informed the War Office that he gave 14 days' notice of his intention to inspect on parade, and yet it frequently happened that no officer was present, and that of the men only enough were brought together to form a squad, not a company, and that squad had to stand for company drill. It was hard to penalise those who attended because of those who did not come, but these small drills were insufficient to enable the men to learn their full drill, although they counted towards efficiency. The consequence was, that when the battalion came to inspection it was found unfit for battalion movement. In 1895 the inspection report of Colonel Lynch was:—

> "The men of this Battalion are of good physique. They were very badly turned out on parade, dirty, unsteady, and wanting in discipline; their accoutrements were badly put on, and very dirty. Last year I reported the commanding officer as very good; since last inspection various matters have come under my notice causing me to change my opinion. I consider him quite unfit to command a battalion. The arms of this Battalion I do not consider to be in good order."

In 1896 Colonel Lynch reported:—

> "The men of this Battalion are of good physique but very badly turned out on parade, dirty and unsteady; the majority of company officers take little or no interest in their companies. The arms of the Battalion are not in good order, being very dirty. I called upon the adjutant for a report on the different companies, which I enclose."

That report of the Adjutant showed that throughout the whole year the sole object aimed at was to get a sufficient number of men to attend the minimum number of drills necessary to earn the capitation grant. The difficulty of the War Office was this—that the men of the Battalion did not know their drill, and did not care to learn it; and to maintain a battalion in that condition would only be possible, with a hope of amendment, if there were good officers. Unfortunately the officers were the weakest part of the whole business. There was no colonel at present, and there had not been for 15 months. The last colonel was, unfortunately, connected with serious irregularities in regard to ammunition. Ammunition was issued free by the War Office on condition that it was not sold by the corps. It turned out that in the year in which the irregularity was discovered by the Adjutant the late colonel had sold on behalf of the corps 18,000 rounds to a rifle club. The club, no doubt, contained some of the richer members of the battalion, to the exclusion of the poorer, who ought to have shared equally in the distribution of the ammunition. [*Cheers.*] But what was worse, after doing this for two years, the colonel had no hesitation in signing the ordinary War Office form stating that none of the free ammunition had been sold. [*Laughter.*]

MR. JOHN WILSON (Falkirk): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that that is quite a common practice? [*Laughter.*]

*MR. BRODRICK said that he certainly knew nothing of the sort. [*Cheers.*] A variety of very intemperate letters were written by Colonel Forrest, and especially in connection with the inspection of 1895, when he wrote to a Member of the House of Commons asking him to put questions about the inspection. Yet, in the circular which had been sent round, there was the statement that a private letter had been made known to the War Office. They were asked why the second in command, Major Black, had not been appointed Colonel. It took Major Black a good many months to decide that he would take over the regiment if he were asked. He knew perfectly well, what was notorious to every one in the district, that a very strong officer was required to make anything of the regiment, and Major Black, however otherwise meritorious, was not pronounced to be equal to the post. As to the other officers, some of them did their duty; but the majority of them had no conception of their duty. Three of these officers—two being in command of companies—were publicans, who had public houses in the very towns or villages where the companies were raised.

MR. JOHN WILSON (Falkirk Burghs) said that the officers were hotel-keepers. [*Laughter.*]

*MR. BRODRICK said that his hon. Friend seemed to think that a man who kept an hotel at which a large number of the privates in his company were habitual customers was a proper person to command that company on parade. These officers were not only publicans, but they took turns to supply liquors on the ranges when shooting was going on. [*Laughter.*] Moreover, their reputations on parade were unfortunately not equal to their reputations as successful hotel-keepers. [*Laughter.*] They were very indifferent in drill. One of them failed to pass a very moderate examination for his present position; and having been given a second opportunity of passing, this officer telegraphed at the last moment before the last inspection to say that he was detained by urgent private affairs. [*Laughter.*] That accounted for three of the officers. The next who commanded a company was a plumber, who did work on payment in connection with the range, and his bills were paid by the corps. He had been noticed by the Adjutant because of his familiarity with the men on parade. He called non-commissioned officers by their Christian names. [*Laughter.*] The next officer was an architect, whose name appeared in the accounts of the corps in connection with the payment for a pavilion which he designed for the range. [*Laughter.*] This officer was not good at drill. The captain of the next company was most indifferent to drill. His company was reported to be one of the worst. The commanding officer was asked to get rid of him, but declined on the ground that he provided entertainments for the men. [*Laughter.*] That officer was detained by urgent private affairs from the last inspection. [*Laughter.*] The next company was without a captain, and the lieutenant was pronounced incompetent for the duty. The next company was commanded by a captain of three years' service. When the Adjutant inspected this company at various times during the year the captain never found it convenient to be present. The company was wretchedly turned out. When the captain was called out to drill, the inspecting officer said to him, "There is the battalion. Manœuvre them any way you please. Give any word of command you like." The captain replied, "I cannot do it, Sir, for I know no words of command." [*Laughter.*] The lieutenant of the company was not able to rescue his captain on that occasion, because he had taken leave for the whole year. [*Laughter.*] The position, then, was this. The regiment had no colonel, and could not get one. The War Office had done its best, but no one would take the corps. Neither the men nor the officers knew their drill. The great majority of the officers avoided the Adjutant's inspection. When they could, they got leave. When the Colonel took the officers round the ranks at the last inspection, he pointed out the dirt and rust on the accoutrements, and asked the officers whether they saw anything amiss. They said that they did not. [*Laughter.*] The Colonel stopped at one man who had come to parade with slippers on. [*Laughter.*] He asked the officer in command whether he saw anything remarkable about that man. The officer said that he saw nothing remarkable. [*Laughter.*] In some cases the officers called the men by their Christian names on parade, and in other cases the men called the officers by their Christian names on parade. [*Laughter.*] At the 1895 inspection, when the men marched off, presumably under the control of their officers, they amused themselves, according to a newspaper report, by firing blank cartridges as they went through the streets at the passers-by. [*Laughter.*] When they got into the train they signalised their arrival at each station by similar discharges. [*Laughter.*] With all these facts before the War Office —[*cheers*]—every chance of reinstating the regiment was tried. First the Adjutant was changed, because the Colonel could not get on with him. But the new Adjutant found that he could do nothing with the regiment. For 15 months there was no colonel; and in the last resort the War Office tried to get some of the neighbouring battalions to take over some of the companies. But none of them would have anything to do with the companies. [*Laughter.*] The War Office was now asked for an inquiry in this case, which had been gone into by the Colonel commanding the regimental district—a man of proved honour, absolute integrity, and implicitly to be trusted in his military Report. It had also been inquired into by the General Officer commanding in Scotland, whose Report was,

> "I consider it absolutely necessary, in the interests of the Volunteer Forces in Scotland, that this battalion should be disbanded."

It was also gone into by the Inspector General of Auxiliary Forces, Sir Francis Grenfell, who visited the headquarters; and it had been carefully considered by the Adjutant General and the Com·

mander-in-Chief; and Lord Lansdowne was now asked to start an inquiry as to whether all these officers, in the discharge of their responsibilities, were fit to decide on this question. The War Office, through the Government, had not hesitated to come to Parliament to ask for large additional sums for the Volunteers. They had done so in confidence that they would be voted cheerfully; but there had been one sentiment in the whole House of Commons on this matter, and that was that in giving larger sums to place the Volunteers on a better footing in regard to mobilisation, they should ask rather for more than for less efficiency. [*Cheers.*] It was a grave responsibility to come before the House to ask for a capitation grant or other payments for a corps which all their military advisers declared to be inefficient. But there was a point far graver than that, and that was to ask the War Office to keep on its legs, and, therefore, to keep ready for mobilisation, and to mobilise with excellent Volunteer battalions, which were to be found in that part of the country, a battalion which did not know its drill and whose officers could not give the word of command, and which, therefore, could not fulfil its functions in line with other battalions. [*Cheers.*] From that point of view he should like to reverse the Motion submitted by his hon. Friend, and to ask the House to declare that in disbanding this Volunteer corps it would be taking care that an injury and an injustice were not done to the whole Volunteer force in Scotland. [*Cheers.*]

MR. JOHN G. HOLBURN (Lanarkshire, N.W.) wished to say a word for the men of this corps apart from the officers. The Under Secretary had read reports of the conduct of the corps during the inspection of 1895. On that occasion the men stood two hours in a perfect downpour of rain. They had their overcoats strapped on their backs, and were not allowed to put them on—[*laughter*]—and they naturally asked, "Why are overcoats sent out at all." It was true some blank cartridge was fired at a few wayside stations, but it was because of the state of feeling which had been aroused among the men. ["Oh!"] It had been said that an Englishman would turn if trampled on, and so would a Scotchman. And, with regard to the officers he would point out that some of them had been officers in the regiment for 20 years, one of them, he believed, for even a longer period. If they were so very regardless of order and discipline, why had they been allowed to continue so long? ["Hear, hear!"] Why had the question never come up till now—till friction arose between the adjutant and the commanding officer, and then between the inspecting officer and the commanding officer? An allegation had been made against one of the officers, a plumber, for running up an account against the regiment. Now this officer erected the targets at the request of all the rest of his brother officers, because it was cheaper for the corps. The officer in question simply charged his men's working time, whereas other employers required something more. He had no hesitation in saying that so far as that particular officer was concerned there could be no stigma cast upon his integrity. Among the men of the corps a very strong feeling had been aroused because there was no fault alleged against them. The question, however, after all was not the petty squabble between Colonel Lynch and Colonel Forrest, but what was now to be done with this fine body of 800 men? [*Laughter.*] Yes, a fine body of 800 men. They could not be surpassed in any Volunteer regiment in Great Britain. He submitted that the House could not be too cautious about taking any steps which might discourage men from joining the Volunteer movement, and, in any case, if there was any fault calling for such a drastic measur as was threatened by the War Office, it should be preceded by some form of inquiry in which the public would have confidence.

Question, "That this House do now adjourn," put, and negatived.

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE.
(EXEMPTION FROM THE STANDING ORDER.)

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY moved—

"That the proceedings on the Voluntary Schools Bill, if under discussion at Twelve o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order Sittings of the House."

The House divided:—Ayes, 285; Noes, 110.—(Division List, No. 109.)

MOTIONS.

MERSEY CHANNELS.

Bill to make Rules for preventing collisions in the sea channels leading to the River Mersey, ordered to be brought in by Mr. W. F. Lawrence, Sir George Baden-Powell, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. Houston, Mr. Walter Long, Mr. Stock, Mr. Willox, Mr. Bingham, and Mr. Warr; presented and read the First time; to be read a Second Time upon Thursday, and to be printed.—[Bill 162.]

ACCOUNTANTS.

Bill to complete the organisation of the profession of Accountant throughout the United Kingdom, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Colville, Colonel Denny, Mr. Bryce-Jones, Mr. Matthew Fowler, and Mr. Patrick O'Brien; presented and read the First time; to be read a Second time upon Wednesday, 31st March, and to be printed.—[Bill 163.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS BILL.

Considered in Committee.

[The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS, Mr. J. W. LOWTHER, in the Chair.]

[PROGRESS, 15TH MARCH.—TENTH DAY.]

Clause 1,—

AID GRANT TO VOLUNTARY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

"(1) For aiding Voluntary Schools there shall be annually paid out of moneys provided by Parliament an aid grant, not exceeding in the aggregate 5s. per scholar for the whole number of scholars in those schools.

"(2) The aid grant shall be distributed by the Education Department to such Voluntary Schools and in such manner and amounts as the Department think best for the purpose of helping necessitous schools and increasing their efficiency, due regard being had to the maintenance of voluntary subscriptions.

"(3) If associations of schools are constituted in such manner in such areas and with such governing bodies representative of the managers as are approved by the Education Department, there shall be allotted to each association while so approved,

"(*a*) a share of the aid grant to be computed according to the number of scholars in the schools of the association at the rate of 5s. per scholar, or, if the Department fix different rates for town and country schools respectively (which they are hereby empowered to do) then at those rates; and

"(*b*) a corresponding share of any sum which may be available out of the aid grant after distribution has been made to unassociated schools.

"(4) The share so allotted to each such association shall be distributed as aforesaid by the Education Department after consulting the governing body of the association, and in accordance with any scheme prepared by that body which the Department for the time being approve.

"(5) The Education Department may exclude a school from any share of the aid grant which it might otherwise receive, if, in the opinion of the Department, it unreasonably refuses or fails to join such an association, but the refusal or failure shall not be deemed unreasonable if the majority of the schools in the association belong to a religious denomination to which the school in question does not itself belong.

"(6) The Education Department may require as a condition of a school receiving a share of the aid grant, that the accounts of the receipts and expenditure of the school shall be annually audited in accordance with the regulations of the Department.

"(7) The decision of the Education Department upon any question relating to the distribution or allotment of the aid grant, including the question whether an association is or is not in conformity with this Act, and whether a school is a town or a country school, shall be final."

Amendment proposed, in Paragraph (*a*), Sub-section (3), after the word "association," to insert the words "and to the needs of the association."—(*Mr. Dillon.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."—Debate resumed.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon Boroughs) asked, as a point of order, whether this Amendment would preclude that of the hon. Member for East Somerset from being moved? The Amendment was to the effect that "in the case of any association the Department, in view of the special circumstances of the schools of that association, or the majority of them," might "fix a different rate for that association."

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS (Mr. J. W. LOWTHER, Cumberland, Penrith) said it would preclude the hon. Member from raising the same question again.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he could not support the Amendment of the hon.

Member for East Mayo, because, in their Amendments to the Bill, he and his hon. Friends took exactly the opposite view, which was that all schools ought to be treated alike. But the hon. Member for East Mayo went beyond the principle of the Bill. The associations were really not advisory boards; they were initiatory boards for the purpose of distinguishing between one school and another. The hon. Member, however, wished to distinguish, not merely between one school and another, but between one association and another. His Amendment would enable the Education Department and the associations to give a larger proportion of this grant to one district, or to one diocese, rather than to another. Districts where the voluntary subscriptions were particularly low would be benefited at the expense of districts where voluntary subscriptions happened to be high. Take the case of London and Manchester. In London the subscriptions were above the average; but in Lancashire, the home of the Voluntary Schools, the voluntary subscriptions did not amount to one-third of the average throughout the country. The result of the Amendment would be that the Catholic or Anglican Voluntary Schools in London would be deprived of a fair proportion of the money which now must be allocated to them under the Bill for the purpose of making up the deficiency created by the neglect or failure of the subscribers in Lancashire to do their duty towards their schools. The Amendment was also unfair as between one denomination and another. How, for instance would it affect Wesleyan schools? The Roman Catholics would bring pressure to bear upon the Education Department. They would point to those schools as supported by rich churches, and attended by the children of the middle classes, and would say that their friends could afford to keep them up. On the other hand they would point to the poor population who supported Catholic schools, and would therefore insist, if these words were imported into the Bill, that the Wesleyan Association should be deprived of its share for the purpose of making up the deficiency with the Roman Catholic Association. That was perfectly unfair. ["Hear, hear!"] The Bill as it stood was bad enough as between one parish and another, between one area and another; it was simply a reward to subscribers who had failed to do their duty. The hon. Member for Mayo proposed further to reward them, not merely by robbing another area, but by robbing another creed. They had too much inequality as between creeds; he did not think it ought to be perpetuated or aggravated. The whole Bill was tainted with unfairness as between denominations and creeds. This proposal simply aggravated and intensified it, and because it was unjust he objected to it.

MR. HENRY HOBHOUSE (Somerset, E.) thought the present Amendment was unacceptable because the effect would be to strike out all reference to what he might call the normal rate of aid, and to leave the Education Department without any guide whatever in the matter. Those who had been contending for the liberty of action of the Department would hesitate to go quite as far as that. It was clear that the Department must have some guide, and they must retain the reference to the standard of 5s. If they did that there were still three courses open to them. They might fix that rate as the universal rate, and there was a good deal to be said for that course, which would remove great difficulties in the way of the Education Department, and give to a school joining an association a sense of assurance that it would at once have a right to the standard rate of aid. But he gathered that it was the view of the Government that there should be some power of discrimination in the Education Department so as to fit their administration to the needs of the different parts of the country. They, however, proposed only to give a very limited power of discrimination—namely, between town and country. Such a rule must work unfairly as between different parts of the country. It was quite true that many town schools were more expensive than country schools, but, on the other hand, it was equally true that many small country schools required a larger amount of money to work them properly than would be required for the education of the same number of children in a more crowded area. That principle had been already recognised in the existing Code. It would not be fair, for instance, to fix the same rate of aid for an association in the wealthier part of the West End of London and for one in the poorer parts of the East End. Nor would it be at all equitable to give the same rate to schools in the poor country districts of Cumberland and Wales and to the wealthy districts of Surrey. He therefore put forward the view which he had embodied in his Amendment—that, if there was to be discrimination at all in the Education Department, it must be a much wider discrimination, and must turn on the special circumstances of the different associations in the different localities. If the Government said it was impossible to carry out such a form of discrimination, they would be driven, in argument at all events, to have no discrimination at all. It would be difficult to maintain that the towns had such a superior claim to aid that it would be fair and equitable to fix different rates for them as against the country. He suggested to the Committee that, if they wanted to avoid the difficulty of discrimination, they should not give the Department power to distinguish between different associations, but should allow the discrimination to take place within the somewhat narrow confines of the associations themselves.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.) said he gathered his hon. Friend's view to be that there ought to be no discrimination exercised by the Department as between association and association.

MR. HOBHOUSE said he had embodied his views in an Amendment on the Paper giving wide power of discrimination; but he said that, if the Department could not carry out such a power, they would be driven to have no discrimination at all.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY observed that, in his judgment, it would not be proper or possible to give the Education Department the discrimination proposed either in the Amendment under discussion or in the much better, but still unacceptable, Amendment standing in the name of his hon. Friend. The responsibility of requiring the Education Department to distinguish between the needs of associations in bulk was so onerous, the pressure put upon them would be of so formidable a kind, that he did not think it would be fair to subject them or any other Government Department to the sort of influences with which they would have to deal. Therefore, though he thought there might be some automatic discrimination as between association and association on the lines suggested at the end of paragraph (*b*), he did not think any further form of discrimination ought to be entertained.

MR. REGINALD McKENNA (Monmouth, N.) said he could not understand the view adopted by the First Lord of the Treasury. Throughout the discussions the right hon. Gentleman had maintained the advantage of being vague; but here was an occasion when the right hon. Gentleman was precise when he ought to have been vague. The Leader of the House had argued that relief should be varied according to the needs of the schools. If he would take as the unit for relief not the school, but the association, every argument which he had used was applicable to the Amendment. Why should not the association instead of the school be the unit? The right hon. Gentleman maintained that it was impossible to give greater relief to the more necessitous associations than to the less necessitous schools. This was not a question affecting the Catholic schools, but it would affect all the Voluntary Schools in the Division of Monmouthshire which he represented. There were there no less than 60 small Voluntary Schools, and all required special relief when compared with the Voluntary Schools of a larger character, but under the Bill as it stood they would be restricted to the 5s. grant. It had been suggested by the hon. Member for East Somerset that it would be difficult to carry out the terms of this Amendment. Under Sub-clause 4 the share was to be allotted to each association, and was to be distributed by the Education Department according to a scheme laid down by that association. If the Amendment of the hon. Member for East Mayo were carried the association would still present to the Education Department a scheme under which the money was to be distributed, but they would not have as a right a claim to the total amount to be given to the association in accordance with the scheme. There might be an excess or a diminished amount allotted, and the only thing that would happen would be that the particular amount allotted to each school would be raised or diminished in proportion to the total amount allotted by the Education Department to the particular association. There was absolutely no difficulty in practice in making the discrimination between the associations.

Mr. J. A. PEASE (Northumberland, Tyneside) said the word "necessitous" was very vague, and there was great danger of apathetic managers being rewarded under the provisions of this Bill, and therefore this money should be divided among the associations as fairly as possible. In Northumberland and Durham they were in a somewhat different position from that of any other portion of the United Kingdom. There were about 606 Voluntary Schools, and 27 per cent. of them were schools in which no dogma whatever was taught. These were schools other than Church of England and Roman Catholic schools. Now whether there was any ground for this belief or not, it certainly existed in the North of England, namely, that the Government were proposing to give this aid grant to Voluntary Schools, not so much for the promotion of the efficiency of education as to endow religion. That being so, it was only natural that the managers of the Voluntary Schools he was alluding to—the 160 schools where no dogma was taught—anticipated that they were likely to receive a very little share of this aid grant, although many of these schools were very necessitous. On that ground he felt that he would be obliged to vote against this Amendment. There ought to be, he thought also, no increased latitude given to the Education Department with regard to the distribution of this grant. The Committee had arranged that Parliament should not control the Education Department with regard to its discretion in the spending of this money, and therefore that was another ground why they should not extend to the Education Department further elasticity and power in regard to the distribution of the grant. ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. C. P. SCOTT (Lancashire, Leigh) confessed to feeling a good deal of sympathy with Mr. Dillon's Amendment, although he should have preferred that in the name of the hon. Member for East Somerset (Mr. Hobhouse) which put the matter a little more definitely. The hon. Member's proposal was that the general rule should be that associations should receive a 5s. grant all round, but that certain exceptions should be permitted in the discretion of the Education Department. The Amendment they were discussing left the whole thing entirely open, and laid down no formal rule at all. Still a good deal might be said for it. As they were giving this money, it ought to go to the most deserving schools, and the schools that would be most likely to benefit if the Amendment were carried would be those of the smaller Nonconformist bodies and of the Roman Catholics. He had a good deal of sympathy with both of these classes. In the first place, unlike some other schools, both rested upon the support of the small subscriber. They were not schools run by a wealthy person, or by a few wealthy persons. Nobody could say of them—"This is my school." Nobody could manage them or control the teachers in them, as was done where schools were practically owned by a few individuals or by one. In the next place, the schools of the smaller Nonconformist bodies virtually served in the districts where they existed as Board Schools. That was to say that in many districts where there was no School Board or Board School these schools served the needs of all the Nonconformist population, as they taught no definite dogma, and were very open and liberal in their organisation. Then, as to the Catholic schools, the money was found, in almost all cases, with much difficulty, and they served a need which all recognised. Judged by the real test as to whether a Voluntary School was demanded by the people—the test as to whether the people using it were willing to subscribe to maintain it—it would be found in every case that the Catholic schools were needed. He believed they would exist in almost every case if no grant whatsoever were given, and they had to be supported entirely by voluntary subscriptions. ["Hear, hear!"] Therefore, both because they rested on a popular basis and because they served a really important public need, these two classes of schools deserved their sympathy, and he hoped a certain amount of favour would be extended to them by the Bill. The Leader of the House, while opposing the Amendment, had pointed to paragraph (*b*) of Clause 1, and he appeared to indicate that the money which might be available under it——

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said he desired to explain that he had inadvertently referred to Sub-section (*b*)—"a corresponding share" to be allotted to associations "of any sum which may be available out of the aid grant after distribution has been made to unassociated schools"—whereas he had meant to refer to the last part of paragraph (*a*).

MR. SCOTT accepted the correction, but said the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman were so extremely relevant to paragraph (*b*) that he would ask a question in regard to it. In paragraph (*b*) it was provided that the money which was not allotted to schools on the ground that they did not associate where they ought to have associated, should be at the disposal of the Education Department for further distribution after the 5s. grant. He did not observe in that paragraph any restriction to the particular association from which the money might be derived. In paragraph (*a*), on the other hand, it was stated definitely that the money should be distributed within that association. It therefore seemed as if what might be called the fine-money under paragraph (*b*) would be available for distribution among the other associations. That, no doubt, would make the fine very much more bitter and much more effective, and he asked the First Lord to state whether it would be possible to distribute the money so available to necessitous associations other than the associations from which the fines were collected.

*MR. R. W. PERKS (Lincolnshire, Louth) said this proposal had been repudiated on behalf of the English Catholics by the noble Lord opposite and by the hon. Member for Donegal, E., and under these circumstances he saw no reason for a variation from the principle proposed by the Government. The Wesleyans had carefully thought out the matter and come to the conclusion that there was no other rational and equitable means of dealing with the question than an equal division all round of the 5s. aid grant to every child.

MR. HENRY BROADHURST (Leicester), who was received with Ministerial cries of "Divide!" thought that if they could not give on the merits of the individual school, they should give on the merits of the association. Therefore, he should support the Amendment. No doubt money might be taken away from Protestant schools and given to Catholic schools, but they were unable to discriminate, and if money were taken away from Nonconformist schools he would rather give it to the Catholics than to the so-called Church of England, whose doctrines were undistinguishable from those of the other.

Question put. The Committee divided:—Ayes, 43; Noes, 350.—(Division List, No. 110.)

MR. SAMUEL EVANS (Glamorgan, Mid) moved, in paragraph (*a*) Sub-section (3) to leave out the word "five" and to insert the word "four." He said he recollected that the Committee had already decided that there should be a grant of 5s. per scholar, but the present sub-section dealt with the allotment of the money to the associations, and he thought that before the Committee decided to allot the sum of 5s. per scholar they ought to have some explanation of the necessity for this allotment at all. The distribution was to be made by the Education Department under the advice of the associations, and he failed to see what was the object of this proposed allotment. So far as he could see, there was no reason why any association under the Bill should have any kind of vested right or interest in the money voted. If only 4s., or about £480,000 were allotted, one-fifth of the money, or about £120,000, would be left in the hands of the Education Department for them to distribute themselves, in the words of the Bill, "in such manner and in such areas as they approve." The result of the adoption of his Amendment would be that the associations would have an absolute right to four-fifths of the money, and there would remain to the Education Department one-fifth, as to the distribution of which the Department would have some kind of discretion. The ultimate destination of the money would be the same.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said he could hardly believe that the hon. Gentleman was serious in moving the Amendment. The House had determined by large majorities that the grant was to be 5s. To leave to the discretion of the Education Department the distribution of one-fifth of the money would compel them to go through each one of the Voluntary Schools in the country in precisely the manner which the whole scheme of associations was designed to meet.

MR. SAMUEL EVANS: What is the meaning of allotment?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said that the associations were not to have the power of distributing the money. They were to have allotted to them a fixed sum for the purpose of recommendation.

MR. J. HERBERT LEWIS (Flint Boroughs) supported the Amendment. He believed that once a scheme had been formulated it would remain unchanged, and so the associations would be able, practically, to carry out their own policy. It was very desirable that the Education Department should have the hold on the associations which the power of the purse would confer.

MR. SAMUEL EVANS asked leave to withdraw his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS called on

MR. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.), who rose to move in paragraph (*a*) Sub-section (3) to leave out from the word "scholar" to the end of the paragraph.

MR. LAMBERT (Devonshire, South Molton)—in whose name an Amendment stood on the Paper, before that in Mr. Roberts's name, namely, to leave out the words "five shillings per scholar," and to insert the words "the sum per scholar contributed by voluntary subscriptions in each year"—asked whether he could not proceed?

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS said he rather thought that the question raised by the Amendment had practically been already decided by the Committee.

*MR. ERNEST GRAY (West Ham, N.) considered that the Amendment could not be in order because, if carried, it might have the effect of increasing the amount of the grant agreed upon.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS said that the objection taken by the hon. Member for West Ham was fatal to the Amendment.

MR. HERBERT ROBERTS moved his Amendment. He wished to recall to hon. Members' minds the intention of the Government as to the use to be made of the provision referred to in the words which he proposed to strike out of the Bill. The Leader of the House, when introducing the Measure, said, "It is manifest that the educational needs of urban districts and the expense of satisfying them must, on the whole, be greater than the corresponding needs in rural societies." The right hon. Gentleman proceeded to say that each association was to receive an amount of money corresponding to the average attendance in the schools, subject only to the condition that if there should be many urban schools in the district they might get more than 5s. The object of that reservation was to enable the Education Department, at the suggestion of associations, to increase the amount of the contributions to Voluntary Schools in towns, and to decrease the amount of the contribution to Voluntary Schools in the country. He objected to giving this power to the Education Department, a power which was to be exercised upon the representatives of irresponsible and non-representative associations. It would be said that the Department knew the educational needs of the country, and to that proposition he assented to a certain extent. While, however, the Department might be perfectly qualified to discriminate between the educational needs of different schools and of different associations, it was not similarly qualified, and ought not to be empowered to fix one rate of contribution for towns and another rate for country districts. The provision in the Bill was unjust to schools in the country. In the speech to which he had already referred, the First Lord of the Treasury stated that the cost of elementary education in towns was greater than in the country, and that ratepayers in towns were more oppressed with taxes than ratepayers in the country. That, he might observe in passing, was a strange commentary upon the policy of the Government in passing the Rating Act of last year. But they ought to ask themselves not only whether too much money was spent in education in towns, having regard to the burdens upon the ratepayers, but also, whether the schools in the country had enough money to enable them to satisfy the educational needs of the districts in which they were. Which class of schools then—the rural schools or the urban schools—deserved to receive the larger amount under this Bill? It was notorious that many of the rural schools were in a very unsatisfactory condition; they were undermanned and ill-equipped. In London, the average amount of money spent upon each child, taking Board Schools and Voluntary Schools together, was £3 17s. 11d. In Cornwall the average was £1 17s. 5d., in Cambridgeshire £1 18s. 9d., and in Bedfordshire £1 18s. 11d. Cases of that kind showed what difference there was between towns and country districts. Then in London 70 per cent. of the teachers in Voluntary Schools were qualified adults, but in country districts the percentage was comparatively low. In Cambridgeshire, for example, only 25 per cent. of the teachers in Voluntary Schools were certificated adults, and in Cambridgeshire the ratio was only 17 per cent. These facts showed that if a larger contribution was to be given to any one class of schools it ought to be given, not to the town schools, but to the country schools. It might be urged that the ratepayers in towns had to make greater sacrifices in the cause of education than people residing in the country; he would ask those who were inclined to use that argument to consider the following cases. In Ashton-under-Lyne the subscribers to the Voluntary Schools provided only 1-17th of the whole cost of education in the town. In Bristol there was one Church school; it received a Parliamentary grant of £1,200, while its supporters contributed only £9 per annum. In Stockport the Parliamentary grant to Church schools was £2,858, and the voluntary contributions did not exceed £7 5s. It could hardly be maintained that town schools of that kind deserved better treatment than rural schools. He would point out also that the taxable capacity of towns was far greater than the taxable capacity of rural districts. The Income Tax Returns went some way to prove this. If they took the assessments under Schedule B., relating to agricultural land in a county, and compared them with the assessments under Schedule D. relating to rents and profits in towns, they would see that that was so. Take Lancashire, for example. In 1894-1895, the agricultural land assessed under Schedule B. only reached the value of £1,600,000, while the assessments under Schedule D. amounted to more than £40,000,000, or more than 20 times the assessed value of the land in the county. And yet, under this Bill, it would be possible for an urban school in Lancashire to receive a far higher rate of contribution than a school in a rural district. In the last place, he moved to omit these words because he thought the provision was unjust to the schools themselves. Under the provision as it stood, what would be the position of schools in the neighbourhood of large towns? In every group of associations there must be a large urban population, and in most of the associations the town population must dominate the county population. In other words, in most cases the rural schools must be under the control of the urban element in the association. Take the case of Liverpool. There were 63,000 children in average attendance in Voluntary Schools, and they would receive something like £15,000 under this Bill. It seemed to him that when the association was formed for Liverpool and neighbourhood, it was bound to take up a large number of rural schools in the neighbourhood of the town; but it was equally plain that the schools in the rural districts about Liverpool would be entirely at the feet of the urban schools and the managers of urban schools in the city of Liverpool itself. He would like to ask the right hon. Gentleman, would a rural school be obliged to join an association for whom a scheme was prepared; and if, having so joined, and having found out that the scheme suggested and approved by the Education Department provided for a higher rate to the town compared with the county schools, would that be considered a reasonable cause for the rural schools to be allowed to sever their connection with the associations? In the interests of efficient education in the rural schools, and in the interests of bare justice to the county schools, he begged to move the Amendment.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY admitted the importance of the question raised by the Amendment. It had been argued, however, by the hon. Member that the Bill laid down that country schools were to be paid less than urban schools, or rather that the associations with a preponderating number of rural schools were to obtain less than the associations with a preponderating number of urban schools. That was not in the Bill, and there was nothing to fetter the Education Department as to whether such a distinction should be drawn at all, or whether, if drawn, it should be in favour of the towns or the country. ["Hear, hear!"] At the same time he admitted the hon. Member had justification for arguing on the lines he did, because in the very first speech he himself delivered on the subject he had not concealed the fact that, in the judgment of the Education Department the needs of associations in which there would be a preponderating number of urban schools were greater than the needs of associations in which there would be a preponderating number of rural schools. Therefore, in all probability, if discretion were left to the Department—as he trusted it would be—they would use that discretion to give to the preponderating urban association more in proportion to the number of scholars than they would give to the preponderating rural association. He would remind the Committee of what they were aware was constantly forgotten by outside critics—namely, that there was nothing in the Bill, or in any possible action of the Education Department under the Bill, to indicate that the rural school because it was a rural school, was to get less than the urban school because it was an urban school. On the contrary, he believed there was probably a larger proportion of rural schools which were either not in need of assistance or had less need of assistance than urban schools. He admitted there were a number of rural schools whose needs were as great as any they would find in the urban schools, and there was nothing in the Bill to require or suggest that, in cases of the kind, the needs of rural schools were not to be as amply satisfied by the associations as the amount of the resources of the associations would permit. ["Hear, hear!"] He would give the broad grounds—and he thought they were adequate—upon which the Department had come to the conclusion that the needs of the urban districts were greater than those of the rural districts. In the first place, strange as it might seem at first sight, the rateable value in rural districts in proportion to the number of children was far greater than the rateable value in proportion to the number of children in the urban districts, taking the country as a whole. That was not a fact by itself conclusive, but it had its significance, which ought not to be left out of account by anybody dealing with this question. In the second place, it was manifest that there were expenses thrown upon urban schools which must be in excess of the corresponding expenses thrown upon rural schools. As a striking instance of that, he might mention the necessary cost of teachers' residences in the towns as compared with teachers' residences in the country. ["Hear, hear!"] In addition, there was the cost of living in towns as compared with the cost of living in the country. In both those respects the charge was thrown upon the teacher first, but ultimately it fell upon the employers of the teachers—namely, the managers of schools—which charge was more onerous in the case of the town districts than in the case of the country districts ["Hear, hear!"] In the next place, from causes familiar to everybody, the amount of education required—by which he meant the number of subjects taught—was greater in the town than in the rural schools. The urban schools required to have teachers competent to teach in a decidedly larger number of subjects than was, as a rule, required in the country schools; and without discussing whether that ought to be so or not, or giving reasons why it was so, the broad fact was admitted that such was the case. It arose partly from the smaller variety of employment in the country districts than existed in the towns. If anybody wanted an indication of the comparative cost of education in the town and country, after all, the simplest and easiest course was to look at what education did cost in those cases where the rates applied to educational bodies in both cases. There could be no doubt that the cost of education in towns was enormously greater than in country districts, and the result of that education costing so much more in towns than in the country was that a special burden was thrown upon Voluntary Schools in towns which was known in their Debates as the competition between the Voluntary and School Board systems in their urban districts, and which weighed with extreme severity upon the managers of Voluntary Schools. ["Hear, hear!"] Nobody who knew anything of the working of the two systems could doubt that that competition was far severer in the case of the urban than of the rural districts, and that of a large part of their rural districts it was not inaccurate to say that the competition could hardly be said to exist at all. The competition was in the urban districts, and it was with that competition that the Bill was introduced and this large amount of money taken from the Exchequer. ["Hear, hear!"] There was only one further point in connection with this that he need mention, but it was not unimportant. It was that rural schools had already obtained an advantage, which in many districts of the country their urban brethren did not receive, from the fee grant established by the Act of 1892. In Lancashire, for example, the establishment of free education had cost the urban Voluntary Schools a great deal per scholar, whilst it had given a great deal per scholar to schools in many of their rural districts. He had not got the figures before him, but his recollection was, that in Cornwall free education amounted not only to free education but to a gift of more than 2s. per head to the schools in which those children were educated. ["Hear, hear!"] In Herefordshire the gain per scholar was about 3s. 6d. per head of the scholars in average attendance. While such schools had gained largely, the managers of Voluntary Schools in some big towns were deprived of sources of revenue upon which they had confidently counted in the past. These were the broad reasons for justifying the Department in using the power of differentiation in favour of towns as against the country. But this was not what they were now discussing—whether the power should or should not be given to the Department, and for this, he thought, there were conclusive reasons. They had considered plans for some kind of differentiation in favour of more necessitous as against less necessitous schools. If the Government could find a plan by which a system of differentiation, which would be equitable on the whole, might be obtained, they would eagerly grasp it as carrying out the spirit that had animated all these discussions—of making the money they had at their disposal go as far as they could in relief of the more necessitous as distinguished from the less necessitous schools. This was the reason which made it extremely important that the House should give this opportunity of differentiation to the Department. The Committee should recollect that the Department had unlimited power of differentiation themselves in these particular schemes, and of creating a scheme even of association as regarded the special amount to be given to each school. Surely, having given the Department that great power and responsibility, they might without hesitation or fear of results hand over to them the far smaller responsibility which was conferred upon them by the last words of the sub-section, and he trusted the Committee would support the Government in retaining the proposals of the Bill.

MR. A. H. DYKE ACLAND (York, W.R., Rotherham) maintained that the contention of the First Lord of the Treasury that town schools were by their very nature more expensive than country schools was capable of almost entire disproof. It might be contended that where there was a Board School rate there was severe competition between Board and Voluntary Schools, and for this reason the latter should receive more, but it could not be contended with any ground of substantial justice that in towns where there was no School Board rate Voluntary Schools had a right to more money than schools in the vast proportion of country districts. He defied any one to prove that in places like Preston or Wigan there was more need for money to aid the Voluntary Schools than in country districts. A small school, by its very smallness, had a greater difficulty in getting on than a large school, which was invariably a school in a town district. On the same principle a large business might often be conducted in many respects more cheaply than a small one. Schools of 400 or 500 scholars in populous towns were carried on much cheaper than schools one-third of the size in country districts. On the first Reading of the Bill the First Lord of the Treasury gave as a reason why town schools should receive special favour that, in the north of England especially, they suffered very much by the Free Education Act. He himself maintained that this could not be proved. Before the Free Education Act in many towns were certain Church schools and an immense number of Catholic schools which did not suffer by the Act, because the managers would not charge the poor parents of certain children anything beyond the 3d. fee. On the contrary, they only charged 1d. These schools, so far from suffering, gained by the Free Education Act. But in town districts, where there was a 5d. or 6d. fee, no doubt when the schools became free there was a certain falling off of contributions. Before the Free Education Act was passed, throughout the country districts the squires, clergymen, and farmers bore the burden of country schools. They did not think the agricultural labourers could afford to pay more than 1d., 2d., or 3d. a week for the education of their children. The squires, the clergy, and the farmers, had gained nothing by the Free Education Act, although they deserved to for their sacrifices in the past in the interests of the poor populations of agricultural districts. In town populations, where the artisans were paying fees up to 9d. for their children's education, the subscribers for years before the Free Education Act made no sacrifices corresponding to the sacrifices of the squires, clergy, and farmers. He submitted that town subscribers had no right to complain. If they wanted their schools to be on a par with country schools where sacrifices had been made let them raise their contributions that they might be equal with those made in the country. The late Lord Selborne and the late Archbishop of Canterbury often said,

> "We cannot understand the claim of the North of England to as much or more than we claim because they say they are poorer. We in the South are subscribing at the rate of 8s., 9s., and 10s. per scholar, while in Lancashire, which is a much wealthier part of the country, they are only subscribing 3s., 4s., and 5s., per child."

The explanation of the whole thing was contained in the simple fact that before the Free Education Act the parents contributed the large bulk of the expense of the town schools, but that since the Act the urban power of raising subscriptions had not kept pace with the requirements of the Education Acts. The argument that town schools had suffered from the Free Education Act had no foundation whatever and should not be brought into this question in any way, for it had no bearing upon it. As to the country schools, he would refer to what the Vice President had said. The right hon. Gentleman made a special appeal to him when he said:—

> "It is impossible that there can be efficient education in any school in which the teacher is entirely single-handed, and yet there are all over the country numbers of small schools in which the teacher is entirely single-handed. I am sure that if hon. Members would visit one of these schools they would be astonished that any person could conduct the school under the circumstances in which he was placed. Well, the association may prescribe that in every school there shall be an assistant teacher, or at least one or more pupil teachers."

If the money was to go largely to help the schools where there was a single teacher, it must clearly go entirely to the country schools, because there were practically no town schools where there was only one teacher. The distinction between town and country was a very serious distinction to put into the Bill as a guide. ["Hear, hear!"] There were a great many town schools which could inevitably be run cheaper than country schools because of their size. The associations would make their claim on the basis not only of the right hon. Gentleman's speeches, but on the words of the Bill, that there ought to be some special claim for town schools, apart from the question of whether they were in a School Board district or not. He thought that was a dangerous claim for them to make, and there was no foundation for it. [*Cheers.*]

Mr. ARTHUR JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke) said it was quite refreshing to hear a speech from the other side of the House in support of the country districts. [*Laughter.*] He was very glad that he found himself in perfect agreement with the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, and he intended to support this Amendment, because he thought the words in the Bill were perfectly unnecessary. He thought they would bring before the associations the necessity of differentiating between town and country schools. He found from experience that the towns generally got the best of these things—[*cries of* "Oh!"]—at any rate, they did very often, and he did not want to give them the chance. He thought all our schools ought to be dealt with equally if they were necessitous. His right hon.

friend had said that the rateable value in towns per number of children was less than the rateable value in the country districts; but he contended the rateable value was no test of the wealth of the two communities. ["Hear, hear!"] In the towns there were wealthy people who could very well support the schools, and did; but what seemed to be forgotten was the great difficulty which many people in the country districts had in supporting their schools, the only way in which they could do so being by great self denial. There were, for instance, the country clergy, who, as a class, were very poor indeed, many of whom had undergone great privations in order to keep up the subscriptions. When this grant was distributed he was afraid that in regard to some of the schools the liberal men would be punished for their liberality, and in regard to others the mean men would be rewarded for their meanness. [*Opposition cheers.*] The wording of the Bill as to this was a direct invitation to the associations to make a difference. He was very sorry to have to vote against his right hon. Friend, but he felt so convinced that these words were unnecessary, and that there would be very great unfairness in making any difference between town and country schools, that he should be obliged to do so.

*MR. JOHN BRIGG (York, W.R., Keighley) said there was in the West Riding of Yorkshire an area which was very much on the same lines as the one set before them by the Vice President of the Council, embracing villages and towns of varying descriptions. The Committee which took in hand the technical instruction of that area had endeavoured to work on the lines of treating all schools alike, and similar grants were given in all cases, whatever was the condition of the classes earning the grants, but they found after a short time that this was not sufficient to meet the wants of the country schools, and the Council had diminished the grants for the town schools in order that the country schools might be able to compete with them. ["Hear, hear!"] The reason why the grant to children was less in the towns than in the country districts was obvious, because without doubt the education of children in the towns could be carried on more cheaply. The country districts were sometimes badly situated as regarded railways, and a special allowance had to be made for the carriage of the children—their fares, etc. The consequence was that these grants had been reduced in the large towns and kept up in the small villages. The country districts were the feeders of the large towns, and it was necessary for industrial purposes that efficient education should be kept up in the country districts. He regretted to see that the line taken up in the clause was that our country schools should be treated less favourably than our town schools.

*MR. ERNEST GRAY said the importance of this Amendment had been shown by the lengthy reply of the First Lord of the Treasury, and he trusted that the Committee would not regret the few moments they might spend in discussing what he considered one of the most important Amendments which appeared on the Paper. He could not allow this occasion to pass without making an urgent and earnest appeal on behalf of the village schools of the country. Surely the sole justification for the Bill was the necessity throughout the country to improve the level of the education in their Voluntary Schools, and if that was needed in any one set of schools more than another it was in the village schools. If the words in the Bill did not, as they suspected, give an absolute direction to the Education Department they must be altogether unnecessary, and should be omitted from the Bill. But it appeared to him that the whole statement of the First Lord was founded on the assumption that there was a distinct direction in the clause.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY explained that he was simply giving the views of the Education Department, and that the Department would act with equity as between the two classes of schools.

*MR. GRAY said he ventured to submit that the Education Department was in this matter altogether in the wrong. It had placed before them the financial position of the Voluntary Schools, but it had not placed before them what the Department would like to see, as the state of efficiency in rural schools. If there was to be any differentiation in treatment as between town schools and country schools, clearly the preference should be given to the country as against the towns. The operation of the Free Education Act had been referred to in connection with this matter. Now, in that case, it was not a question as between town and country. It was rather a question as between localities—between the North and South. Fees were charged both in town and rural day schools in the North, but they were not charged as a rule to so great an extent in the South. The question there was between localities, and was not a question as between urban and rural schools. The question of competition had also been referred to, and he was glad to see that this phrase was somewhat dying out of the Debate, for he believed it never had been fully realised what it meant. It meant that School Boards in the urban districts had been able to meet the requirements of the Education Department, and, therefore, they gave education at a higher level of efficiency. The Voluntary Schools in the towns had struggled to keep pace with them, and if they had done so it had been with great difficulty. In rural districts, the level of education had never been so high as in the urban districts, and the very object of this Bill was to level up education in those small rural schools; and how could they be raised, how could they be lifted up unless the necessary funds were at the disposal of the associations for distribution among the rural schools? Of necessity, the rural associations must include a large number of these very small schools, and those were the very schools that needed State aid more than any other class of schools in the country. He would give one very sufficient reason which should influence all friends of education in giving preference, if preference was to be given at all, to the rural schools. The Education Department would calculate the grant for separate schools upon the average attendance. Now it was much more difficult to secure a high average attendance in country schools than it was in urban schools. If they took two populations exactly alike, one in a rural district and the other in an urban district, they would find that the children in the urban district, who had lived under the shadow of the school they might say, would make a good attendance, and that attendance was not much affected by the state of the weather. But in a country school, where they had half the children, perhaps, coming from a distance of three miles, a bad winter would reduce the attendance to such an extent that it would spoil the average attendance for the whole year, and thus would reduce the grant to very narrow limits. Surely the object of this Bill should not be to accentuate those difficulties which already existed? Surely a lead should not be given to the Education Department against the rural school, or, if the words were not a lead, then remove them altogether from the Bill. It was argued by the First Lord that the words would have no such effect, but they said that it would be injurious if the Department acted upon them. The examination he had been able to make in the last few months had convinced him that the needs of the small village schools had not been exaggerated. The Vice President had stated that one of the first objects he should propose in the distribution of the money would be the addition of a second teacher in the schools that had only one. The needs of the rural schools in this respect were indeed great, and the expenses were exceptionally heavy. He pleaded most earnestly that if any differentiation was made, it should be in favour of the rural schools, or, at any rate, that there should not be this line of demarcation in the Bill, which appeared to him unjustifiable, and might be provocative of great injury. At the present moment the children in these rural schools started life heavily handicapped in competition with the children of the urban districts. They started worse equipped in every respect, and surely this could not be justified, for the children had a claim to start upon an equal footing in villages as in urban districts. He trusted that even now, or at a later stage, the First Lord would reconsider his determination, and see his way to omit the words which, if they were not altogether worthless, would be likely, from his point of view, to do a considerable amount of harm.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said the consensus of opinion seemed to be that the words in the Bill placed in the hands of the Education Department a discretion which the Department should not exercise. There seemed to be a strong feeling in favour of omitting these words. As a London Member he recognised that the words might be of advantage to London where rates and subscriptions were heavy, but from such knowledge as he had he knew that the strain upon Voluntary Schools and the need for assistance was greater in the rural districts. The words in the Bill did not sufficiently define what the Department was to do, but there was no doubt that they conveyed the impression that, in the distribution of the grant, the Department were to favour the schools in the towns more than the schools in the country districts. Town and country certainly formed no proper basis for discrimination. He trusted there would be no discrimination; but if there was to be discrimination, he thought it should be in favour of the country districts rather than of the towns.

*Mr. GRIFFITH-BOSCAWEN (Kent, Tunbridge) said it was almost certain that this Amendment would raise a certain amount of rivalry between town and country, and that certain country Members on the Government side would support the Amendment. He was a country Member, but he most emphatically supported the Bill as it stood, because it simply left the matter to the Education Department. The Bill did not lay down that the town schools were to get more and the country schools to get less, but, the object of the Bill being to give aid to the Voluntary Schools according as aid was needed, it said that the Department might have a discretion to give more relief to one class of schools than to another. But even if the Bill did lay down that the town schools were to get more and the country schools less, he would still support it; because the town schools were infinitely more necessitous than the country schools; and Members would take a very narrow view if they looked merely to the needs of the schools in the constituencies they represented, when the object of the Bill was to preserve the Voluntary Schools all over the country, and to distribute the grant according to the needs of the schools. It was practically only in the towns that there existed that competition between Voluntary Schools and Board Schools which was the serious and intolerable strain that had broken the backs, or nearly broken the backs, of many of the Voluntary Schools. In the towns the cost of education in Board Schools was far higher than in Voluntary Schools, the difference in London being no less than 22s. per child. How then were the Voluntary Schools to continue to compete with the Board Schools unless they got considerably more than 5s. per child? And they could not get more than that unless the broad principle were laid down that the town schools suffering from this competition should, on an average, get a higher rate than the country schools. It seemed to him, therefore, that the proposal in the Bill was perfectly fair and sensible. Very probably it would work out that certain associations in the north of England—in Lancashire, for instance—would get more money per child than associations in the south. It might happen, for instance, that Lancashire might get more than Kent. That would be a perfectly fair result, because Lancashire would want more than Kent. The schools were not to be paid so much all round, which would be a wasteful process, but were simply to be paid according to their necessities.

*Mr. R. W. PERKS (Lincolnshire, Louth) said it did not follow that Kent would not receive more than Lancashire, because the amount depended on the area of the associations, and the relative proportion of town and country schools within such area. The Borough which constituted the centre of the hon. Gentleman's constituency contained no less than 17 Voluntary Schools, all of which, with two exceptions, were Church of England schools. He supported the Amendment as the representative of a large rural constituency, which would suffer very materially if the principle which was laid down by the First Lord of the Treasury as representing the views of the Education Department in the allocation of the grant were adopted. In the county of Lincoln there were 600 schools, of which 450, or thereabouts, were denominational schools. Of those 450 denominational schools 100 were situated in the 10 towns and 350 in the villages of Lancashire. How then could the provisions of the Bill be defended in Lincolnshire, when it would have to be pointed out that there would be a very small allowance for the villages of Lincoln, and that for the towns of Lincoln there would probably be a grant far in excess of the grant for the village schools. There was a very small average attendance in those village schools. Take, for instance, the village of Tathwell. There were 160 children on the books of that school, but the average attendance was only 84. In another village on the wolds of Lincolnshire where there was accommodation for 80 scholars, and where the number on the books were 45, the average attendance was only 20. Those village schools were, therefore, already punished sufficiently enough, even if there was an equitable division of the grant at 5s. per scholar. Why then should there be this unjust differentiation between the schools in the town of Louth and the schools in the neighbourhood of that town? Why should it be said that when they got out of the confines of Louth they were to punish the little village schools because they were in the country and not in the towns? There was no doubt that these small village schools were suffering in a most distressing way. The sanitary conditions of many of these schools were vile in the extreme. The conditions under which the children were housed were disreputable and disgraceful. He was not saying whose fault it was. It frequently arose from the small number of children in these village schools. He ventured to say that a very strong case had been made out for an equitable distribution of this aid grant equally among the village and the town schools, at all events of Lincolnshire, and, having in view the interpretation put upon this clause by the First Lord of the Treasury, it became really necessary that they should not permit these words to continue in the Bill.

*SIR FRANCIS POWELL (Wigan) thought the course of this Debate eminently proved the wisdom of the Government proposal. The hon. Member opposite had strongly urged the case of the rural districts; other hon. Members had advocated the case of the town districts, and he thought the result of the interchange of opinion was, that there were some cases where a preference ought to be given to the towns and others where a like preference ought to be given to the country. He represented a manufacturing district, and he naturally and necessarily desired that if any preference was given it should be given in favour of the towns. There was great truth in the remark of the First Lord that the cost of education was greater in the towns. No one could be acquainted with the vast masses of their urban populations without feeling that they involved great difficulties; and that to provide them with education must be a more laborious and also a more costly, operation than to provide the same education in the country districts. It was very probable that in a town they found a large school cheaper than a small school; but the comparison was not between large schools and small schools in the same town, but between the towns as a whole and the country as a whole. In Lancashire they had to deal not only with these vast masses of population, but also with a poor population. In the Roman Catholic schools in that county there was poverty which would excite the visitor's sympathy, and, at the same time, a quickness of intelligence which would excite his admiration. It was quite true that in Wigan, at least, the Roman Catholic schools were in a large degree free schools before the passing of the Free Education Act. The condition of those schools was such as to make one feel surprised at the exertions made under very great difficulties, and, at the same time, to desire that these difficulties should be removed and that they should be rendered more efficient and complete in their appliances. He felt that they had very strong claims, and he hoped they would not be refused. Accusations had been made in the course of their Debates of negligence and penuriousness in Lancashire, and reference was made by his right hon. Friend the Member for Rotherham to the case of Wigan. In view of that fact, he thought he might be permitted to say that, in the last Report of the Education Department, the exertions made in Wigan were the subject of special commendation, and it was pointed out that, largely owing to the liberality of Churchmen, the accommodation was considerably in excess of the requirements. There could be no doubt that free education had pressed more heavily on the towns than on the country. In Lancashire, particularly, great difficulties had been caused. The income from the fees had gone, and a sudden strain had thereby been put on the Lancashire schools in addition to the strain put upon them by the demands of the Education Department — demands which might have been perfectly right and admirable in themselves, but which had increased the strain until it had nearly reached the breaking point. He believed the difficulties of the towns were greater than those of the country, and he ventured to say that they had a just claim for special consideration.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY appealed to the Committee to come to a decision upon this question as soon as possible. He might point out to the Committee that the only persons who ought to vote against the Bill as it stood were those who believed that town and country were precisely equal, neither more nor less. Anybody who thought the country required more money than the towns ought to vote against the Amendment, because the Bill enabled such cases to be met by the Education Department.

*MR. ERNEST GRAY asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would consider the desirability of cutting out the words "town and country schools," thus reserving to the Education Department the power of differentiation according to necessity and not locality, if it pleased?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY was understood to dissent.

MR. A. J. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside) said he should like to point out that, though the right hon. Gentleman was quite correct in stating that the words in the Bill would not enact any preference to one class of schools against another, it was impossible to separate the words in the Bill from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, in which he spoke of the necessity of giving a preferential payment to the town schools over the country schools. He stood there as the representative of a large urban population, but at the same time he could not withhold from himself the conviction that the rural school was the worst off in this country, and most needed help—help in the matter of teachers, of equipment, and, in fact, of everything that went to make a school efficient. He knew from experience that there was no class in the community which had made so large a sacrifice for the maintenance of Voluntary Schools as the clergy in the rural districts. In many cases they had involved themselves in pecuniary difficulties, by pledging their incomes and credit to maintain their schools. They felt the "intolerable strain." But if the right hon. Gentleman would visit those schools he would find them miserably equipped, and the teachers greatly overworked. Why were the Lancashire towns so far behind these rural schools in subscriptions? The fact was that the children used to be sent to work young in Lancashire, and as soon as they began to work large fees were demanded of them. The schools had depended on these fees, and the Free Education Act had involved them in difficulties. But were those difficulties to be met by taking from the poor clergy in the rural districts their share of this grant, and giving it to the rich manufacturing districts? Lancashire was the one part of England which had not done its duty by education. In 1894 the subscriptions in Wigan were only 2s. 3d. per head, and what had been done in recent years had been done under great pressure. Compare any agricultural county with the manufacturing districts of Lancashire, and it would be found that the subscriptions in the former were double those of the latter. It was said that the schools were much cheaper in the country. Were they? Education might be cheaper in the country, but not where it was equal to the education in the towns. Where the quality was the same, the cost in the country was far greater. He knew some model rural schools which cost over £3 per head, and there was no extravagance.

*MR. HARRY FOSTER (Suffolk, Lowestoft) said that he had hitherto supported the Government in every division on this Bill, but he found himself in a difficulty on this Amendment. The Department was empowered to discriminate between town and country schools, in favour of either the one class or the other. But the Department had no power to discriminate between one part of the country and another, and their decision, whichever class of school it favoured, must hold for the whole country equally. If the Department had discretion, he should be willing to leave the schools in his constituency in the Department's hands; but it was evident that the needs of each class of school, as opposed to those of the other class, varied with the various parts of the country. Great pressure would be brought to bear on the Department to get it to favour one class or the other, and the result must be that the Department would not take the responsibility of differentiating at all. He knew the difficulties of the Parliamentary situation for the Government, and he would not press for a modification of the clause at another stage; but he did hope that some Amendment would be introduced in another place to relieve the Department of the onerous and invidious choice which they were now left to make. The House of Commons was a more competent body to decide which should be preferred—the town or country schools, if any differentiation was to be made. Not only in his own constituency, but in others, great injury might be done to the rural schools if the Department differentiated in favour of urban schools as a class.

Mr. SAMUEL EVANS failed to find in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman any indication of what in the view of the Government was a country school and what was a town school. So far as he was aware the words "town" and "country" had never before been used in an Act of Parliament to describe various districts. There was no definition at all in the Bill of what was a town and what a country school. Yet the decision of the Education Department on the question was to be final. But in discussing an Amendment it was most important that the House and the country should be informed what the view of the Government or the Department was. It was quite true that according to the way the Bill was framed the discretion given to the Department was an absolute one, but the opinion had been clearly expressed by those responsible for the Bill that differentiation must be exercised in favour of the town school over the country school. There were great difficulties even in this. Were the associations to cover not only one class of schools, but two classes of schools? Were they to have rural schools with one rate, and town schools with a differential rate in the same association? He wanted to know whether they could allot money to the same association at two different rates. [The First Lord of the Treasury: "Certainly."] He was much obliged for a courteous answer across the floor of the House, but they had not been informed of that before. That, however, showed the difficulty of the work to be intrusted to the Department. They would actually have one association for what up to now had been considered an association for one class of schools, but what appeared now to be possibly an association which might represent both classes of schools—an association which would have to administer money at two different rates. As the First Lord of the Treasury said there might be the two classes of rates, he should like to know further whether the Department in one district of the country could decide in favour of the town schools, and in another district in favour of the country schools? The hon. Member for East Ham did not care for denominational schools because they were denominational schools, but where there were such schools he wanted them to be made efficient. The standpoint of the hon. Member for Tunbridge and the noble Lord the Member for Rochester, was a totally different one. They were in favour of denominational schools because they were denominational. [Mr. Griffith-Boscawen: "And because they are efficient!"] Not at all. The hon. Member knew perfectly well that the most inefficient schools were denominational schools, and that was because of the poverty of the country districts in which they were situate. He was not afraid of those, but in boroughs where there were School Boards he was afraid of the disappearance of the denominational schools entirely, and, therefore, he wanted this preference to be given by the Department to the schools which were in the boroughs. He had said consistently all along—while objecting to the grant in aid altogether—that if given at all it should be so allocated and distributed as to secure the efficiency of education in the schools. Was it fair that the supporters of the schools, who had made sacrifices to keep up the voluntary contributions, to pay their teachers in necessitous and poor districts, that these schools should be put into the background with a smaller rate per child, whereas the schools in a town, with much more capacity for maintaining them, much more wealth, because those schools had not been properly maintained, were therefore to have preferential treatment? That was not a principle which ought to be accepted at all. He warned the Government that, though it would have been very convenient to produce a skeleton Measure, under which the Department and associations might do almost what they pleased, nevertheless, in the practical working of the Measure they would find themselves placed in very great difficulty. The Committee was to be told that the Department were to have indicated to them by Churchmen, like the hon. Member for the Tunbridge Division, that their care was not to look after the interests of education, but that they must give a preferential rate to the towns over the rate given to the country, simply because the denominational schools in the towns might be swamped. If the Government and their supporters voted against this Amendment, then they would indicate to the country that their wish was not to promote the interests of education —["Oh, oh!" *and cheers*]—not to encourage local effort, not to put a premium on sacrifice, but to put a premium on lethargy, carelessness, the utter want of any local effort, and to show that their desire was to preserve the denominational schools.

The FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY claimed to move "That the Question be now put." [*Opposition cries of* "Oh, oh!" *and Ministerial cheers.*]

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 190; Noes, 65.—(Division List, No. 111.)

Question put accordingly, "That the words 'or, if the Department fix different rates for,' stand part of the Clause."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 183; Noes, 72.—(Division List, No. 112.)

On the return of the CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS, after the usual interval,

MR. ELLIS GRIFFITH (Anglesey) proposed, paragraph (*a*), Sub-section (3), to leave out the words "town and country schools," and insert the words "districts in which rates for School Boards are levied, and those in which no such rates are levied, and for." He said his object was to provide that more consideration should be shown to a district in which there was, in addition to the support of Voluntary Schools, a School Board rate levied. They had been told that the Bill was introduced in order to relieve "an intolerable strain," and the intolerable strain was felt most in those districts which had to support both Voluntary and School Board schools. They had a substantial grievance, which ought to be taken into account by the Education Department. This was a matter in which the Committee ought to give the Education Department specific instructions. He would give the Committee one or two examples. In Reading and Stockport the number of children in the schools was 10,000. In Reading there were Board Schools, but in Stockport there were none. In Reading the School Board rate amounted to £11,750, and the voluntary subscriptions to £1,900. In Stockport the voluntary subscriptions were only £816. The inhabitants of Reading therefore contributed in rates and subscriptions about £14,000, while the people in Stockport contributed only £816. That showed a tremendous difference in the circumstances of the two towns, which ought to be taken into account. He would also compare Preston and Birmingham. The number of children in the schools in Preston was 17,000, and in Birmingham 72,000. No rate was levied in Preston, but in Birmingham the School Board rate amounted to £103,000. Preston subscribed £4,200, and Birmingham £4,900. Thus Birmingham, educating four times as many children, contributed £107,000, and Preston only £4,200. The object of the Amendment was to instruct the Education Department to take such facts as those into account.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER, Isle of Wight) said it was not possible to adopt the Amendment. The hon. Member had only referred to one kind of strain—namely, that which occurred in places where there was a School Board rate; but, as had been pointed out over and over again, that was not by any means the only strain to be removed. But the Amendment would not meet the evil to which the hon. Member had referred. In order to meet that evil it must be assumed that an association was confined to places in which School Board rates were levied, or to places in which they were not levied. It was not possible for anything of the kind to occur throughout the Kingdom. There must be many cases in which the association would embrace both School

Board and non-School Board districts, and therefore it was not possible to make the differentiation suggested in the Amendment. Why should scholars, who happened to be in a school which was situate in a district where there was a School Board, command a higher rate of capitation than those in schools in places where there were no School Boards? Whatever might be the object of the Amendment, it would be unworkable, and would give an indication to the Education Department which could not practically be carried into effect.

MR. McKENNA said the hon. and learned Gentleman had gone upon the assumption that the terms "town and country" could be used; but those terms were extremely vague, and once the Department had given a meaning to them it would be bound by its own ruling, and therefore whatever objection the hon. and learned Gentleman might make to the Amendment, the very same arguments would apply to the discrimination made in the Bill between town and country. If such vague terms were to be used, why should not the terms "x and y" schools be used, leaving it to the Department to decide what they meant, as it was declared by Sub-section 7 that it was to decide what was the meaning of "town and country?" He admitted that there was a certain adumbration or semi-concept of an idea in those terms, but in construing an Act of Parliament the exact meaning of the words used ought to be determined. What did "town" schools mean? Did it mean schools in a district under a Town Council? Was it to exclude urban districts? If so, the Bill would work intolerable unfairness in many parts of the country. In Monmouthshire, for instance, there were no towns to speak of. They were all urban districts, under urban district councils, which included the very poorest part of the population. If this Amendment were accepted it would have this advantage, that they would know the particular cases in which the advantage of this extra money was to be given. Why should the Committee be kept out of the secret as to the meaning of these words? He appealed to the Vice President, who was responsible for the Education Department, and would be responsible for the definition of these vague terms, to tell the Committee their meaning. He considered the answer given by the Attorney General to his hon. Friend entirely inadequate. Until the Education Department finally determined what should be the meaning of these words it would be besieged by school managers anxious for an interpretation favourable to their own particular schools.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE thought the Government had not dealt very frankly with the Committee, who wanted an interpretation of words which were now introduced for the first time into a Bill. He did not believe there was any precedent for this use of the words "town" and "country." The Government were asking the Committee to give the Education Department arbitrary power to discriminate between town and country, and yet refused to define the meaning of those words. The learned Attorney General had referred to the case of Wigan, where practically there was no School Board. There was, therefore, no distinction between Wigan and an ordinary Voluntary School district. He would compare with Wigan the town of Bangor, which was a School Board district, and where there were Voluntary Schools as well. There were four Voluntary Schools in the town, the subscriptions amounting to 17s. per child, and the School Board rate amounted to 24s. per child; so that if there ever was a case of intolerable strain Bangor's was a case of that kind. In Wigan there was St. Thomas's school, to which the voluntary contribution was only 3d. per child; another school to which the contribution was 5½d. per child, and yet another, to which the contribution was only 2¼d. per child. But under this Bill Wigan would actually get a larger share of relief than Bangor, with its contribution of 17s. and its School Board rate of 24s. There was no strain in the case of Wigan; but in Bangor there was a heavy strain upon the liberality and munificence of the ratepayers, and therefore something ought to be done to relieve it. They ought to be told plainly what the Government intended to do, and what class of towns they proposed to subsidise to the detriment of other places. It ought also to be made clear whether the expression "town" was to include urban districts, or whether it was to mean boroughs exclusively.

Mr. HERBERT LEWIS (Flint Boroughs) said that the settlement of this question was apparently to be left to the right hon. Gentleman opposite, who appeared to be in a state of coma. [*A laugh.*] He appealed to the right hon. Gentleman, notwithstanding the condition in which he found himself at present, to emerge for a moment from his shell, and to give the Committee the benefit of his views upon this important question—a question which he himself would have to decide outside the House of Commons at a future time. What reason was there why there should not be a full and frank interchange of ideas with the right hon. Gentleman upon this subject? They were asked to leave it entirely to his judgment to decide what was to be town and what was to be country. However highly they might respect the right hon. Gentleman—and they regarded and respected him very highly on the Opposition side of the House—they would like to know, before parting with this money, what, in his opinion, was town, and what, in his opinion, country. All that they wanted was a little light and leading on this subject from the one man most competent to give it, and the one man into whose hands they were committing very largely the destinies of the urban and rural communities respectively in this country. The question of town and country would not be decided separately as between association and association, but for the country as a whole. There should be some definite plan before them, so that they might know what they were committing themselves to. The Amendment proposed a definite and intelligible plan, and if it was accepted they should know how the money was going to be expended.

Mr. BROADHURST remarked that in the royal county in which he resided they should be under peculiar difficulties in respect to the definitions given them in this Bill. In the county of Norfolk he thought there were only three or four incorporated towns, but there were nearly a dozen under urban district governments, and it would be a great advantage to that county, to say nothing of others, if they could have some other definition offered them than that which had been given by the Attorney General. The hon. and learned Gentleman had endeavoured to enlighten their minds, but in doing so he seemed himself to be in more doubt than the hon. Member who had moved the Amendment. The hon. and learned Gentleman gave them no clue whatever to the definition of what was to be town and what country. Indeed it appeared to him they should have to ask the Department to issue a new dictionary when the Bill became law, to know what were the meanings to be applied to the different expressions. A new "Webster" would be necessary. [*Laughter.*] The Attorney General had failed to give them any definition, and he would invite the Leader of the House or the Solicitor General to elucidate the subject the Member for the Isle of Wight had failed to throw any light upon. He should also like to see the Vice President—with whom he had the greatest sympathy—take a more active part in the discussions, because the right hon. Gentleman would be left in the autumn with a vast amount of definition work on his hands, while some of his more fortunate colleagues might be pleasantly occupied in open-air pursuits.

Mr. J. H. YOXALL (Nottingham, W.) thought the line ought to be drawn, not between School Board and non-School Board districts, and not between town and country, except insomuch as country schools, as a rule, were small schools, and the town schools large. The real difficulty arose with the small school. This Bill proposed to give to schools a sum in aid on the number of scholars in attendance at the schools as a rule. It was obvious that they could not run a small concern at as low a cost per unit as they could run a large concern, and the small schools were proportionately more expensive to carry on than the large schools. He was not in favour of this Amendment, neither was he in favour of town and country, and if it was any use moving further Amendments he should move, in place of "town and country," to substitute "large and small." He recognised, however, the uselessness of moving Amendments against the words used in the Bill, and he should content himself by making the suggestion that the line ought to be drawn between large and small schools.

Mr. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) observed that all the discussions on the question of differentiating had proved conclusively the absolute impossibility of doing anything fair all round in any system of differentiation. It seemed to him to have been shown that all systems of differentiation would lead to confusion and bitterness, and the only solution was to give the five shillings all round to all schools.

MR. SAMUEL EVANS said he was entirely opposed to the Amendment, the real father of which was not his hon. and learned Friend who had moved it, but the hon. Member for Poplar. He was opposed to inserting words differentiating between districts in which rates for School Boards were levied and those in which no such rates were levied. He desired to point out what the effect of the adoption of the Amendment would be. The object of the Bill was not to relieve ratepayers at all, but to help necessitous schools, and he did not see how that object could be gained at all by the adoption of the Amendment. On the contrary, if carried it would create one great difficulty which he was sure his hon. Friend did not want to create, namely, it would put a premium upon the non-erection of constitutional School Boards and Board Schools.

Question put, "That the words 'town and country schools' stand part of the Clause."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 230; Noes, 81.—(Division List, No. 113.)

MR. SAMUEL EVANS proposed, to leave out from the word "rates," in paragraph (*a*) to the end of paragraph (*b*), Sub-section (3). His object was, he said, to call the attention of the Committee to the very serious character of the proposal made in Sub-section (*b*). There might be a surplus left in the hands of the Education Department for distribution dependent upon the number of unassociated schools. The result of this Sub-section would be that the share which was left in the hands of the Education Department would go entirely to the Voluntary Schools which were in the association. He contended that this surplus ought not wholly to go to the Voluntary Schools in the association, but ought to be distributed fairly between those which were within the association and the others which were outside. In short his argument was this, that whatever surplus remained by reason of the exclusion of non-associated schools from the benefit of the grant, ought to go, not to associated schools only, but should be fairly divided between associated schools and non-associated schools which had not unreasonably refused to associate. He moved the omission of the words from the word "rates" to the end of Sub-section (*b*).

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY thought that the hon. Gentleman would see that his suggestion was not practicable. He stated hypothetically that after the distribution there remained a sum of money over. The Education Board would require all that for the needs of the unassociated schools, but the Bill must also contemplate the possibility of the money not being required for that purpose, and, surely, there was nothing unreasonable in saying that it should be distributed among the associations in proportion to the other grant? ["Hear!"]

MR. J. A. PEASE said the Government had no right to assume that the unassociated schools should receive less than their fair share of the grant. The treatment should be equal for associated and unassociated schools, and there was no justification for the penalising of an unassociated school by the sub-section. The distribution should be impartially made as between associated and unassociated schools.

SIR FRANK LOCKWOOD (York) thought the right hon. Gentleman had somewhat cavalierly answered his hon. Friend who had raised a point worthy of consideration. These unassociated schools which were to receive a portion of the sum distributed among associated and unassociated schools were unassociated not from any unreasonable conduct on their part, and why, therefore, should they not be treated on absolutely the same basis, with the same liberality, the same generosity as the associated schools? Unless the right hon. Gentleman awarded this equal treatment he laid himself open to the criticism that he was bribing schools to enter associations, or exercising compulsion to that end. The schools which had not entered associations having reasonable grounds for not doing so, should take their share of the surplus.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir ROBERT FINLAY, Inverness Burghs) said there was an obvious answer. There was the total amount of the aid grant, and of that the associations took a certain amount, calculated at the rate of 5s. per child in attendance. From what remained the Department would deal with the claims of the unassociated schools, and each school would get what it wanted. What more could they desire? There were a certain number of unassociated schools which had unreasonably refused to join associations and forfeited their claim to the grant, but the schools entitled to a share, having received their share for the promotion of efficiency in education, what more did they want?

Mr. T. W. NUSSEY (Pontefract) could not see how the distinction came in. It seemed to be part of the policy to starve and penalise schools that remained out of the association. After the bare needs of schools had been supplied the balance should be given to the Exchequer, or if any balance was to be devoted to educational luxuries, that should be shared alike by associated and unassociated schools. If there was to be a possibility by association of receiving a sum over the 5s. a head, the finances of these schools would be in a state of flux and uncertainty, and there would have to be a second distribution, but surely the Department would have more than enough to do in working the complex machinery of this Bill. In the interest of fair play between the two classes of schools he regretted that the Government had not accepted the Amendment.

Mr. BARTLEY said that if the view taken by the Solicitor General was correct, and that all the unassociated schools were to get all they wanted, the sub-section might very well be left out, because the unassociated schools would absorb all that there was, and a great deal more, if they got all they wanted.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL: The hon. Gentleman has misunderstood me. I did not say they would get all they wanted in the sense of all they might claim, but all they really needed.

Mr. BARTLEY thought there would be some advantage to the schools in remaining out of the associations, because while the associated schools would only get 5s. per head at the outside, the non-associated schools would, according to the Solicitor General, get all that they reasonably wanted, which might mean more than 5s. per head.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON said it was perfectly obvious from the Sub-section that the Government thought that the bulk of the schools would go into the associations. The Department would have to judge whether the excuse offered by a school for not joining an association was reasonable or unreasonable ; and, besides, the associated schools would have, as a sort of additional bribe, this division of the surplus fund amongst them.

*Mr. HARRY FOSTER said that, attaching, as he did, importance to the inducements offered by the Bill, as he thought to join associations, he was astonished and alarmed at the statement of the Solicitor General. As he understood the hon. and learned Gentleman, the associated schools would have a grant of 5s. per head, and the unassociated schools which had reasonably refused to associate were to have their reasonable needs supplied, which might conceivably be not 5s. but 10s. per head, after which the surplus, if any, was to go to the associated schools. If that were so, the non-associated schols would be in a better position than the associated schools. [*Ministerial cries of* "No!"] That, at least, was how he and other Members understood the statement of the Solicitor General, and he earnestly asked the hon. and learned Gentleman to give the Committee a clearer explanation of the matter. It seemed to him that this would offer a premium to schools to remain outside the associations. The Department would have no power to give more than 5s. per head to associated schools, while they might give more to non-associated schools.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said that when he read the words he took exactly the same view as the hon. Member who had just spoken—that the surplus was going to be distributed fairly among the unassociated schools. He now gathered from the Solicitor General that that was not going to be the case. They must take some figure. Let them assume the surplus amounted to £50,000 or £100,000. The result would be that the associated schools would get 6s. per child, whereas the unassociated schools would only get 4s. per child. It was perfectly clear under the sub-sections they had already passed, that they must allot 5s. per scholar to the associated schools. If they were going to distribute the surplus which was not derived from that 5s. per scholar, it must be over 5s. What he wanted to point out to the Solicitor General was, that if this Sub-section was going to be brought into operation at all, the only possible effect of it would be that they would differentiate between the associated schools and the unassociated schools, and that in favour of the associated schools. He thought they were entitled to ask the Solicitor General again upon what ground the Government proposed to discriminate between the associated and the unassociated schools, where the unassociated schools had not remained out of the association for any reason which the Education Department could condemn? He could understand the attitude of the Government being this. They might say that they considered that this principle of association was a very important one, and that they were going to offer every inducement to schools to become embodied in those associations. In order to do that, where there was a school which declined to become a member of the association for insufficient reasons, they would fine it by depriving it of its share of the 5s. grant. That was a perfectly appreciable policy. But take the case of a school where the Education Department admitted there was good ground for refusing to become a member of the association, and let them assume it was a necessitous school. Upon what principle of common justice could the Government pay 6s. to a school which was in the association and refuse to distribute any portion of the surplus to the other school, which was equally as necessitous and equally as deserving? He would ask the Government this question. Take the Voluntary Schools in various parts of the country which did not belong to any denomination. Would they force all these undenominational schools, one possibly at Land's End, and the other at Berwick-on-Tweed, to form one association? It was simply ridiculous.

Mr. C. A. CRIPPS (Gloucester, Stroud) thought there could be no difficulty in appreciating this, when it was understood what the Solicitor General said. [*Loud laughter.*] With a few exceptions, there was no misunderstanding on that side of the House. The first fallacy which the hon. Member opposite had fallen into was this. Whether they were dealing with schools in associations or not, they were only going to give assistance to necessitous schools. As regarded the amount which they were to divide amongst necessitous schools, they limited it by 5s., distributed over all those schools whether necessitous or not. As regarded the amount which they could distribute amongst the schools which were not in the associations, there was no such limit at all; and, therefore, the Education Department, in dealing with necessitous schools outside the association could, if they thought it was right and proper, give a somewhat larger amount than the 5s. a head for these schools would come to in the aggregate. There was no unfair treatment in that as between associated and non-associated schools. Probably after that there might be an insignificant surplus. [An hon. Member: "Why insignificant?"] The surplus could only arise in respect of schools which unreasonably refused to join the association, and, therefore, it must be very small. All the Bill proposed to do was to put the associated and the non-associated schools on exactly the same footing, because in the former case there was a limit of 5s. per head all round, and in the latter case there might not be that limit. But in either case, the amount given to the necessitous school depended on the Education Department alone. In the one case the discretion of the Department was fettered, in the other case it was unfettered; and if there was a surplus where the discretion was unfettered it must go to be divided among the necessitous associated schools. That there was nothing unfair in this was proved by the fact that there were two contradictory views of the effect of the sub-section. The hon. Member who moved the Amendment said that the words favoured the unassociated schools, and another hon. Member had urged that they favoured the associated schools.

Mr. McKENNA said it was a fortunate thing for the Committee that the Solicitor General carried the hon. and learned Member for Stroud about as a sort of glossary on his utterances. But to him the question had not been made clear by the hon. and learned Member's interposition. There was another class of schools from which a surplus could be derived—the non-necessitous schools. The original allotment to the associations was to be distributed according to a scheme. After this had been done, the surplus would be discovered; therefore, the surplus would have to be devoted to works of supererogation in the associated schools.

*MR. SYDNEY GEDGE (Walsall) thought that the Committee had had a great deal of discussion about a very small matter. There would be a number of associations, and there would be so many children in each. The Education Department would allot them a total sum equal to 5s. per head of the total number of children. The Department would then allot a corresponding sum to the non-associated schools, which might, for the purposes of argument, be regarded as forming one large body. There was no limit to the sum to be given to any particular school, and therefore if a balance remained in hand it could not be wanted for any of these non-associated schools, as to give it to them would stultify the Department's action. But this surplus must be dealt with. The Bill gave it to the associations for schools which had not received enough. This was fair, and as it was best for the work of the Department and for education that schools should join associations, there could be no objection to give them this small additional inducement to do so.

*MR. C. P. SCOTT said it was quite evident that the hon. Member for Walsall had read into the Bill words which were not to be found in the Bill, and it was precisely for the reason that there was no sum definitely allotted to the reasonably unassociated schools that the matter was so important. They might search the Bill from beginning to end, and they would not find in it any statement of the amount which was to be assigned to the unassociated schools. It was left entirely to the discretion of the Department. Therefore, it was perfectly plain that there was no guarantee that the average 5s. a head was to be given to the unassociated schools. Now what did that mean? They were told that schools were not bound to associate. A very large number would not associate, and, therefore, they would have a very large number of schools with no guarantee whatever of the amount they were to receive.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY expressed the hope that the Committee would bring a not very profitable discussion to a speedy determination. There was no difficulty in the matter. This sub-clause was introduced in order to find a method of dealing with any surplus that might remain after the associations had been dealt with under the fixed 5s.-a-head grant. It was evident that that surplus must be dealt with somehow, and the sub-clause simply gave directions to the Department how to deal with it as among the associations. It was evident that, whatever part of that money was due to the associations ought to be distributed among the associations on exactly the same principles as the principal sum had been distributed, and all that the sub-clause did was to say that that available money should be so distributed among them. He trusted the Committee would bring the discussion to a close.

*MR. PERKS said the question would not affect either the Wesleyan or the Roman Catholic schools, because they would form their own associations, and there would be no residue left from those schools. The British schools would also probably form their own associations, so that the residue which was to go to the aid of the associated schools would come from the Church of England schools which did not join the federations. There were 12,000 Church of England schools in this country, .of which 8,000 were in the rural districts. The First Lord of the Treasury said that the Education Department would give higher grants to the town than to the rural schools, and consequently the residuum which was to be handed to the associated schools, and not distributed in assisting the unassociated schools, would be largely taken from the Church of England schools in the rural districts who failed to join the associations.

MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Notts, Mansfield) rose to continue the dission, when

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY claimed to move "That the Question be put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 268; Noes, 100.—(Division List, No. 114.)

Question put accordingly, "That paragraph (*b*) of Sub-section (3) stand part of the clause."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 273; Noes, 102.—(Division List, No. 115.)

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I beg to move "That the Question 'That the words of the clause down to the word "The," in page 2, line 4, stand part of the clause' be now put." [*Ministerial cheers.*]

Question put, "That the Question 'That the words of the clause down to the word "The," in page 2, line 4, stand part of the clause' be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 263; Noes, 96.—(Division List, No. 116.)

Question put accordingly, "That the words of the clause down to the word 'The,' in page 2, line 4, stand part of the clause."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 263; Noes, 94.—(Division List, No. 117.)

MR. J. MORLEY (Montrose Burghs) appealed to the First Lord of the Treasury to allow progress to be reported. [*Ministerial cries of* "No, no!" *and* "hear, hear!"] It would not be unreasonable now to break off the discussion, seeing that the Committee were approaching one of the most important clauses of the Bill, containing the provision that made association compulsory, and this clause would require a searching discussion. He reminded the right hon. Gentleman that last night when he announced the Motion for the suspension of the Twelve o'clock Rule he said there was no desire to keep the Committee sitting to an unreasonable hour, and it must be admitted the Committee had made good progress, the discussion having been to an almost unprecedented degree participated in by the hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House. The hour which had been occupied with another matter entirely at the earlier part of the sitting arose on a Motion moved from the other side of the House. He moved "That the Chairman do report progress, and ask leave to sit again."

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY thought if the right hon. Gentleman would cast his mind back over the incidents of this and the preceding night he would see that his Motion, moved in terms to which he did not in the least object, was not a reasonable one to press. [*Ministerial cries of* "Hear, hear!"] The House decided after 5 o'clock, by a large majority, to continue the discussion after Twelve o'clock, and surely it was not worth while to occupy some 20 minutes beyond the usual time. ["Hear, hear!"] The House would stultify itself by such a proceeding. [*Ministerial cries of* "Hear, hear!"] The Motion moved earlier in the evening was moved from the Ministerial side of the House, it was true; but three-fourths of the Gentlemen whose support made the Motion possible were on the opposite side of the House, and of those not a small section were Members who took an active part in the discussion of the Education Bill. However that might be, they would stultify themselves—having determined that it was necessary to put their shoulders to the wheel—[*cheers*]—and hurry on this Bill faster than it had been going during the nine or ten days it had already been in Committee—if they were at 20 minutes past Twelve o'clock to decide it was time to go to bed, when at Four o'clock they had decided that midnight was not the proper hour at which to adjourn. [*Ministerial cheers.*] He therefore trusted that the right hon. Gentleman would not press his Motion.

MR. H. H. ASQUITH (Fife, E.) said the right hon. Gentleman could hardly have anticipated when about Five o'clock the House came to the decision to suspend the Twelve o'clock Rule that such progress would have been made with the Bill. He looked back somewhat wistfully to the time when those who were now in Opposition were responsible for the conduct of Government business; and he could honestly say that he never remembered an instance of the same progress having been made with a Government Bill as was made with this Bill to-night. [*Opposition cheers.*] The right hon. Gentleman had tried to suggest that the fault of an hour having been—he would not say wasted, but—expended early in the evening was mainly due to the intervention of Members on the Opposition side, but if they had eyes in the back of their heads they would have seen—

SIR WILLIAM WALROND (Devon, Tiverton): Thirty-three Members rose on your side and only nine on ours. [*Cheers.*]

MR. ASQUITH said the Motion would not have been made possible had not an adequate number of Gentlemen on the Government side risen to declare that in their opinion the discussion of the subject was necessary. Therefore, the responsibility for that discussion must be shared by both sides of the House. But he was sure that no one outside the Treasury Bench would dispute that, in regard to the Voluntary Schools Bill they had been engaged that evening in discussing two or three of the most important questions that could arise, and that that discussion had been fairly and equitably shared by both sides of the House. Now they were approaching the discussion of a sub-section which was the kernel of this part of the Bill. So long as the associations were not to be compulsory, there was very little difference of opinion between both sides of the House, but they had now reached the question whether the associations were to be compulsory or not, and they felt that that vital topic could not be adequately discussed at half-past Twelve o'clock in an attenuated House—[*Ministerial cries of* "No, no!"]—and without any possibility of an adequate report of the proceedings going forth to those who were interested in the Bill. [*Cheers.*]

MR. BROADHURST said the First Lord of the Treasury seemed to have forgotten that to-day was Wednesday and that Members would have to be back in their places in less than 12 hours [*Opposition cries of* "Hear, hear!"] In view of that fact he thought the Government ought to assent to the Motion and allow them to retire to their homes at a decent hour. [*Laughter.*] The First Lord's own side was thoroughly wearied out—[*Ministerial laughter*]—for he never remembered a night when he had so often been asked to pair. [*Renewed laughter.*]

*MR. LEONARD COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin): My memory goes back to the time before the Twelve o'clock Rule was invented, and I have not myself so much regard for that Rule, as I think it often acts as a preventive to doing business. And the singular way in which Members of this House refuse to go on after Twelve o'clock strikes me as another proof of the degeneracy of the age. [*Laughter and Ministerial cries of* "Divide!"] We used to go on until One and Two o'clock with very good temper and very good dispatch of business. But I cannot disconnect the position at present from the question which is immediately before us. If we were going to discuss such questions as we have been discussing for the last few hours, I should be quite ready to go on, and go on merrily; but we have immediately before us now what is one of the most important questions on this part of the Bill. [*Renewed Ministerial cries of* "Divide!"] My memory also extends to another characteristic of this House, and that is that immediately below the Gangway, on the Ministerial side, you will find a number of Gentlemen who are bound to remain here because the Whips will not let them go—[*Opposition laughter, and Ministerial cries of* "Divide!"]—and who have no political instinct. [*Loud Opposition cheers, and continued Ministerial cries of* "Divide!"] Their desire to suppress discussion has prevailed, whether a Liberal or a Conservative Government is in office. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] Having relieved myself of that little memory, I recur again to what is the question before us. Does my right hon. Friend at the head of the Government think he is going to settle this question to-night? I do not believe the right hon. Gentleman thinks he can. [*Cries of* "Yes!"] I am asking my right hon. Friend at the head of the Government, and he has not said he thinks he can; and I would ask further, whether he thinks it is a question which ought to be settled to-night? [*Opposition cheers.*]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY was understood to say "Yes."

*MR. COURTNEY: I would ask my right hon. Friend whether it is a question which he, if he were in Opposition, would consent to have settled to-night? [*Opposition cheers.*] This is the question on which the supporters of the Bill are most divided. The clergy interested in this grant are of very diverse opinions. The protests against compulsory association are manifold; and to have the discussion of the proposal at a time when our discussions are *in vacuo*—when they have no echo in the outer world; when they are not reported; when the limitations of newspaper production do not allow our utterances to meet our constituents—[*Ministerial cries of* "Divide!"]—those are considerations which may well cause a Leader of the House to hesitate before carrying the discussion to a conclusion. If we cannot conclude the discussion to-night, is it well to begin? In former days time was occupied with Motions to Report Progress, and that the Chairman do leave the Chair; and in the end the Leader of the House had to give way. Such Motions were made an abuse of the Rules of the House, but they did compel Leaders of the House to be reasonable. [*Opposition cheers.*]. I appeal to my right hon. Friend to be reasonable without any compulsion. [*Ministerial cries of* "No!"] I appeal to him not to begin a discussion which cannot be conducted in a proper and becoming manner, and which cannot lead to a definite conclusion this evening. [*Cries of* "Yes!"] If my right hon. Friend is convinced of that he will not begin a scene which will reflect no credit upon us, and not assist the progress of the Bill. [*Ministerial cries of* "Divide!"] I have voted for all the Closure Motions this evening. I want to get the Bill on. But I respect Parliament even more than the Bill. [*Loud Opposition cheers.*] In the interests of the House of Commons I appeal to my right hon. Friend to lend a reasonable ear to the appeal which has been made to him. [*Ministerial cries of* "No!"]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: My right hon. Friend has made an appeal to me, and it would be discourteous to disregard an appeal made by one who has occupied such a distinguished position in this House. But I must inform the right hon. Gentleman plainly, that his interposition to-night, though no doubt meant in the interests of the dignity of this House, does not conduce to the objects which I believe he has in view. [*Loud Ministerial cheers.*] The right hon. Gentleman has recalled days when we were both Members of this House, and when the hour at which we have arrived would have been regarded as comparatively early for dealing even with more important business than that now before us. The House have had full warning of the intention of the Government, and by a large majority have declared that they approve of that intention. [*Ministerial cheers.*] And it appears to me that we should be stultifying ourselves and the decision at which we have arrived if we now refused to deal with the question which lies immediately before us. My right hon. Friend has told us that if we begin the discussion it will be impossible to conclude it. Sir, I cannot agree with my right hon. Friend. [*Ministerial cheers.*] It appears to me that if the scale on which he and hon. Gentlemen opposite desire to discuss the clauses, subclauses, lines, words, and commas of the Bill—[*Opposition cries of* "No!"]—that if that scale is to be the scale on which our discussions are to be pursued, I do not see how legislation is to be carried on at all in this House. [*Ministerial cheers.*] But it is sufficient for me to remind my right hon. Friend that if the Opposition, as he thinks, and as I think, improperly throws us upon this course, this end of the evening, for the discussion of this question, it is they who are to blame, and not we—[*cheers*]—and though we have to submit, as we may have to submit, to a certain amount of physical and mental fatigue, and though we are to be deprived of the glory and encouragement which I understand some hon. Members of the House derive from seeing their words reported at full length in the papers—[*laughter*]—those losses, though not inconsiderable, are not, in my opinion, sufficient to make us go back upon the course which we deliberately entered upon early in the evening, and reverse a policy deliberately adopted by a full House on the very day on which we adopted it. Sir, I join with my right hon. Friend in the desire that our proceedings should be dignified and orderly, and should conduce to the proper elucidation of the questions under debate; but I cannot agree with him that the course which he presses upon the Government is the one most likely to carry those great ends into effect. [*Cheers.*]

MR. SAMUEL EVANS, who spoke amid Ministerial cries of "Divide," appealed to the Leader of the House not to persist in his Motion, especially having regard to his declaration the previous night that he would not consider it necessary to ask the House to sit to a late hour. Besides that, it was now Wednesday morning, and the House had to meet at Twelve o'clock noon; though they were still at the beginning of the Session the right hon. Gentleman had appropriated four days of the week to this Bill, and, moreover, he had stated it was not necessary to carry the Bill before the 31st of March.

MR. T. LOUGH (Islington, W.) rose to continue the discussion, when

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 232; Noes, 83.—(Division List, No. 118.)

Question put accordingly, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 81; Noes, 233.—(Division List, No. 119.)

MR. T. W. NUSSEY (Pontefract) moved to leave out Sub-section (5). He said that the object of the Sub-section was to give power to the Education Department to exclude a school from any share of the aid grant if, in the the opinion of the Department, it unreasonably refused or failed to join an association. To that extent, he contended the clause was compulsory, as it would have the effect of compelling schools to join an association. The Leader of the House was reported in *The Times* to have said the other day, in reply to the hon. Member for East Mayo, that these associations were voluntary associations in the fullest sense of the word. If, however, schools were to be compelled to join, he could not see how the associations could be voluntary associations in the fullest sense of the word. It might be said that the Department would not put the sub-section in force, and that it would be a dead letter; but the Vice President of the Council had said that the Department would have to see that no school remained out of an association without a valid cause. Therefore it was the intention of the Government that this sub-section should be used, and that schools should be compelled to join these associations against their will. Who wanted compulsion, and whom would it benefit? Would it benefit the Roman Catholics? He thought not; and the Roman Catholics could do all that they wanted to do by means of voluntary association. Did the Wesleyans want compulsion, or the supporters of British schools? He thought not. As to the Church of England, the right hon. Member for Bodmin had said just now that there was a great division of opinion among its members as to whether these compulsory powers should be put in force or not. The evidence was by no means clear that there was an overwhelming desire among members of the Church of England that this sub-section should stand part of the Bill. The Bishop of Hereford was reported to have said at the meeting of convocation, at Church House—

> "There is another course we took, and that was, with an equally light heart and very little discussion we voted compulsory federation. Well, my Lord Archbishop, I doubt if there are half-a-dozen persons in this room who have thought out the result of that. You are proposing to set up a compulsory ecclesiastical local authority everywhere to administer the funds of the State. I am not sufficiently sanguine to believe, or even to hope, that the country will accept that; and, if they do not, where are we?"

Archdeacon Wilson and others had also spoken against these compulsory associations; but he was aware, of course, that there was a considerable body in the Church who were favourable to them. The noble Lord the Member for Rochester had said that, in his opinion, these associations ought to be compulsory upon two grounds. In the first place the noble Lord said that it was to expect too much of human nature—even clerical human nature—to expect it to be entirely unselfish in these matters. He took a more favourable view of clerical human nature, and thought that the managers of denominational schools, without compulsion, would be willing to form voluntary associations and to help their weaker brethren. There was sufficient public spirit and zeal among managers of schools of the same denomination to enable them to arrive at voluntary equitable settlements. The second argument of the noble Lord was that he was not at all sure that if he were a manager he would feel inclined to enter into a voluntary federation, and that he should hold his position as a trustee. If that was going to be the attitude of the managers of all the efficient Voluntary Schools, he did not think that the scheme of compulsory association would work well. A vast amount of friction and discontent would be created if these trustees were compelled to join associations against their sense of right. Parliament, he knew, was, technically speaking, supreme, and, of course, any school that had been hardly treated under a scheme of association would be able to appeal to that House. Although Parliament was supreme on this subject, he thought it would be utterly impossible for Parliament to re-examine in every detail the plans which they had passed as a whole. He did not think it would be possible for any Education Department to undertake that task. The second alternative would be that any managers discontented with the scheme of association could retire from the association, and lose the whole of the 5s. grant which the Bill proposed to give them, and he thought the sense of injustice, which would be strongly felt, would compel the managers of Voluntary Schools to adopt that course. The third alternative would be that they might remain in the association and grumble and suffer under their injuries, whether fancied or real. That was a result which the supporters of this system of compulsory federation viewed with equanimity and gratification. He could not believe that associations based upon a system of compulsion and containing within themselves elements of such discontent would prove a permanent blessing or assist the voluntary system. He thought, moreover, that by the institution of compulsory associations they were really setting up a premium on bad management. If they compelled efficient and non-efficient schools to join the associations they would seriously interfere with that individual enterprise which had caused Voluntary Schools to be a success in many places in this country. They would have managers of efficient schools saying that, after all, it was no good keeping their schools in a state of efficiency, when their zeal and care for education were so badly rewarded, and they received less money than their neighbours who took no pains with the schools, and no pride in education. On the other hand, the managers of inefficient schools would say they had been compelled to join the associations, they would find they got more money for their inefficient schools than was given to the efficient schools and they would say, "After all, we think our course in keeping the schools inefficient has not been altogether amiss." He should like to ask who was going to pay the expenses connected with the associations? The expenses of the Diocesan Association in London amounted to 2s. 3d. per child, and he could not help thinking that associations extending over a wide area and including a large number of schools must have more expenses attached to them than a London one. He should like to know whether the expenses of the voluntary associations were to come from the aid grant, or from the voluntary subscriptions? He thought it was extremely unfair to force those who did not wish to do so to join in the associations and incur this expenditure and loss for what they believed to be a very doubtful benefit indeed. He should also like to call the Committee's attention to the final words of this clause.

> "But the refusal or failure" (to join an association) "shall not be deemed unreasonable if the majority of the schools in the association belong to a religious denomination to which the school in question does not itself belong."

It seemed to him that the associations would be denominational as well as compulsory associations. It was the first time the State had authorised its money to be used for the endowment of denominational education. He readily admitted that he did not think associations could be successfully formed on any other than a denominational basis. Wesleyans would form their associations by joining together several circuits; the Church of England associations would probably be diocesan. But there were no words in the Bill to show how the schools were to be represented on the associations. Would each school send a representative? If so, almost invariably he would be the clergyman of the parish, or the minister of the congregation to which the school belonged. If, however, these associations were to be formed on a different basis, and to elect representatives in proportion to the number of scholars in average attendance, even then there would be a preponderance of the ecclesiastical element in the associations. The head of the Church of England associations would be the Bishop, of the Wesleyan associations one of the leaders of the Circuit, and the Catholics would adopt a similar principle. The 5s. grant was raised from every sect in the State, every class in the community irrespective of creed.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: I think the hon. Member is wandering considerably from the Amendment. [*Ministerial cheers.*]

MR. NUSSEY said he bowed loyally to that ruling, but this was, he believed, the first time public money had been spent to compel schools to join associations founded on such lines. It would tend to increase sectarian bitterness, and to raise up old animosities between creed and creed. What was the First Lord of the Treasury's interpretation of the word "reasonable" in the clause, relating to the case where a school "unreasonably refuses or fails" to join an association? The interpretation of the word unreasonable was placing a wide discretion in the hands of the Education Department, and the Committee ought to have a definite explanation of what would be deemed "reasonable" or unreasonable. Supposing they had an area embracing 100 schools, and 60 schools voted for an association and 40 against. If the association was formed would the refusal of the large minority of 40 be held to be "unreasonable" or not. In the alternative, if 60 schools voted against forming an association and 40 for, could the minority of 40 form an association, and, if so, would the 60 schools be compelled to join the association or lose the 5s. grant? He thought they were entitled to have some sort of interpretation as to the lines on which the Education Department would consider action in regard to this matter to be reasonable or unreasonable. He thought the Government would be taking up a more reasonable position if they permitted the associations to be merely voluntary. He thought they would be able to see in two years how the associations would work. He hoped the Amendment would receive consideration at the hands of the Government. He begged to move the Amendment.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said it had been the practice of hon. Gentlemen opposite to describe the associations as compulsory, but they were not compulsory. There was no power in the Bill to require schools to form associations. When hon. Gentlemen were driven out of that position they complained that when the associations were formed it would be compulsory on schools to join them. Even that statement, however, should be greatly modified before it could be accepted as accurate. In the first place, they had carefully provided that no schools should ever be compelled to join an association of schools the majority of which did not belong to the same denomination as itself. In the second place, dealing only with those associations which were of the same denomination as the school which had refused to join, and which reasonably ought to have joined, even then the word compulsion was really rather a strong word to use. The worst that could happen to any school that refused to join an association was to be left exactly where hon. Gentlemen wanted to leave every Voluntary School in the country. The worst that could happen to the Voluntary School was not to have that grant from the Exchequer which hon. Gentlemen had been striving to withdraw, not merely from the schools which refused to join an association, but from every school. [*Opposition cries of* "No!"] He did not call that compulsion—it was a penalty which hon. Gentlemen would desire to be universal. [*Renewed cries of* "No!"] If the votes of hon. Members on the day when the Bill was introduced into Committee had any meaning, they intended it to be universal. [*Ministerial cheers.*] If imposed at all it was a penalty not likely to be imposed on any school in need of the grant the Government desired to give. In the judgment of the Government—and it had even been admitted by hon. Members opposite in their more candid moments—the work of distribution would work with incomparably more smoothness if carried on through associations. Under any circumstances a large weight of responsibility would be thrown on the Education Department, and in the earlier stages of these discussions two Members moved Amendments to make the allocation of the grant absolutely automatic as between all schools. He considered that the two sides of the House were agreed on this fundamental principle, and was it asking too much to say that schools who refused to co-operate should not have the benefit of the grant? It appeared to him a most reasonable and moderate condition. A large sum of money was going to be given; whether it was adequate or not it certainly was not small, and it was not too much to ask, as a condition of the grant, that managers of schools who refused to lend themselves to the machinery provided for the distribution of the grant should be deprived of the privilege of receiving the grant, that is if they unreasonably refused. In his judgment the Bill would be seriously impaired if they were not to imply on the very face of the Bill that it was regarded as a duty for schools having at their door an association of other schools by hypothesis belonging to their own denomination to associate with these schools for the distribution of the funds. The request was reasonable, the penalty was not severe, and he hoped the Committee would adhere to the Sub-section. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. ACLAND said it was difficult to piece together the two parts of the right hon. Gentleman's speech. He began by telling the Committee that the word compulsion had been misused, but he ended by declaring that it was perfectly reasonable to refuse the money if these schools were not willing to co-operate with the associations and the Education Department. If the Department refused money which all Voluntary Schools thought they were entitled to share, that was in fact compelling schools to enter association subject only to the condition in the subsection under discussion, and this was compulsion according to the usual interpretation of the term. All Voluntary Schools claimed a fair share of the grant, not all claiming the 5s. a head, some admitting that other schools were more needy, but all the schools believed they deserved something from the grant. The right hon. Gentleman said to those schools, "If you refuse to join one of those associations you shall have nothing whatever." Why was that inevitable cause of heart-burning and friction introduced into the Bill? In the Bill of last year the associations were voluntary, and that provision was deemed perfectly satisfactory. No one demanded that they should be made compulsory. He was sure that a large number of the followers of the right hon. Gentleman were dissatisfied with the compulsion put upon the schools to join the associations. [*Ministerial cries of* "No, no!"] The danger of this proposal, which included compulsion, was that they would draw in a great many schools against their will, and when they found they did not receive the full grant they expected they would be, not only dissatisfied, but greatly discouraged. It would not fulfil the objects the promoters of the Bill had before them, because good managers being discouraged, subscriptions would fall off, and this compulsory entrance into associations would produce a great deal more friction because it was compulsory. The ultimate result of this would be that, after they had compelled the schools into the associations, they would find that, in 90 per cent. of the cases, they could not draw a distinction between necessity and non-necessity, and they would end in the long run by giving them all the same grant. This compulsory clause was going to enormously add to the friction, the difficulty, and the annoyance of the process. It was going to add to the unpopularity of the Bill, both in the formation and the working of the associations, and it was going to add a distinct feeling of unpopularity in relation to the Church, which would be the largest operator in regard to these compulsory associations, and to the whole idea which was connected with the grant to Voluntary Schools. He thought this was one of the most unfortunate parts of the Bill.

*MR. HARRY FOSTER said he had two Amendments on the Paper, but as he did not intend to move them he should like to say a few words in explanation. It was satisfactory to him to know that, although there was no actual compulsion to join the association, there was a very strong inducement to do so, for any school which refused to join incurred the risk of being found in an unreasonable attitude by the Department, and in that case was penalised by not sharing in this extra grant. Believing, as he did, that the association of these schools would be of enormous advantage to them, he was very glad there was this provision in the Bill. In his own diocese there had been for some time a series of associations, and the Report which they had just issued showed that the whole diocese expressed their earnest hope that the Government would retain the associations clause, and stated that the Board experienced the greatest difficulty in dealing with schools which were not associated, and that nearly all the difficulties that had arisen during the past year had been in cases where the schools had not been members of the ruri-decanal associations. If the majority of schools did not come into association, and their refusal to do so was held to be reasonable, the work thrown on the Education Department would be so heavy that it would be almost impossible to discharge it.

MR. T. LOUGH (Islington, W.) said that the First Lord of the Treasury had insisted that the formation of these associations was entirely voluntary. That might be true literally, but it was not true actually, because of the strong inducements which could be brought to bear. Out of 100 schools, only 10 might be willing to form an association. But, directly they had formed an association, they would be able to exert the compulsory powers for bringing in the other 90 schools. It was fair to ask for a definition of the word "unreasonable." In counties like Lincolnshire and Shropshire, where the country schools outnumbered the town schools, if the town schools were given the larger share of the grant, the country schools might withdraw. Would that withdrawal be held to be reasonable? Suppose a school could show that a majority of the schools in an association were of another denomination, then they could not be found guilty by the Department of unreasonable conduct in refusing to join. But its conduct might conceivably be unreasonable, although just a majority of schools were of another religious denomination. Therefore, the latter part of the clause was almost as objectionable as the first part. On the whole he thought there was good ground for pressing the Amendment.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE took the case of two schools, in one of which the supporters contributed 30s. per child towards its maintenance, and in an adjoining one, where there were richer landowners, only 2s. 6d. per child was contributed, and asked whether, supposing the supporters of the former school were not going to join in association, this would be held to be unreasonable conduct on the part of that school. And would it be deemed a reasonable ground for refusing to join that the managers of a school thought that the only result of doing so would be that their votes would be swamped, and that they would not get their fair share. They ought to get some indication from the Government as to their definition of the word "reasonable."

*Mr. GRAY said that, as he should vote for the rejection of this Sub-section, he should like to state his reasons. He believed that the Sub-section would very largely destroy the main object which the Bill had in view, and that the ultimate result of it would be the universal distribution of 5s. all round to Voluntary Schools. [*Opposition cheers.*] The only argument adduced in favour of this particular section was that if these schools would not share in the duty of advising the Department, they should take no portion of the money. He could easily foresee—in fact, he knew from statements made in different parts of the country by the managers of well-conducted schools—that they disliked very strongly this particular clause. It was perfectly true that it was not absolutely compulsory, but it attached a certain penalty to the schools which did not desire to associate themselves with the other schools in the district. The better-class schools saw no possibility of obtaining any assistance from this fund by entering the association, and desired to stand apart, but the probability was that, in order to avoid any imputation of want of charitable feeling, they would enter the association, disliking intensely the task which would be put on their shoulders of advising the Department as to the redistribution of the fund among themselves in varying proportions. He felt pretty confident himself that the result would be no differentiation within the area of the association. Feeling, therefore, that public opinion outside the House, whatever it might be in the House, was largely opposed to the retention of this particular clause—[*Ministerial cries of* "No!" *and Opposition cheers*]—well, he could only say that at a recent gathering at Bournemouth clergyman after clergyman rose and declared his opposition to what he described as compulsory federation and his objection to any penalty being attached to a school which declined to join the association. As to the definition of the word "reasonable," he held that the people in the locality would be better judges of the reasonableness or otherwise of their determination; and, feeling that there was a disposition among the managers of the very best of the Voluntary Schools not to have their local affairs touched or interfered with in any way, he would support the excision of this passage from the Bill.

*Mr. J. A. PEASE said that he could indorse the view expressed by the last speaker, for there was a strong opposition to the Government proposal by both the Church party and other owners of Voluntary Schools. In Northumberland and in Durham there was a general disposition to view this proposal with considerable suspicion. Twenty-seven per cent. of the Voluntary Schools in those counties were not managed by either members of the Church of England or of the Roman Catholic persuasion. In these schools, many of which were necessitous, no dogmatic religion was taught, and it was absurd that the House should endeavour to compel these schools to unite in one association and to arrange the distribution of a fund of this kind. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord had stated that the associations would be divided into Church of England, Roman Catholic, Wesleyan, and *omnium gatherum.* He presumed the Voluntary Schools in which no dogmatic religious instruction was given would be included in the *omnium gatherum* class. But these schools were managed by a variety of managers. One school would be a British School; another would be managed by a colliery proprietor; another by a business firm; another by trustees; another by the Congregationalists; another by the Independents; another by the Methodists; and another by the Baptists. He protested against all these schools being forced into an association when there was nothing in common in their management, and the owners of these schools naturally looked with some suspicion and considerable dislike on the proposal of the Government, and he therefore would vote against what was practically a provision to compel these schools to associate against their will. On that ground he thought they were fully justified in opposing the Sub-section.

*Mr. CARVELL WILLIAMS believed that the First Lord of the Treasury had wholly failed to convince any considerable number of Members of the House that the Sub-section was not based upon the principle of compulsion. He had asked whether it would be a reasonable thing on the part of the school managers to refuse to co-operate in carrying out what the right hon. Gentleman regarded as a most admirable and beneficent method of promoting national education. He forgot that there were a considerable number of persons in this country who were by no means enamoured of this portion of the Bill, and who regarded the proposal to form these associations at least with very considerable misgivings. Although the First Lord seemed to find it impossible to conceive good reasons why schools should not unite, it entirely depended upon local circumstances. There were many reasons why managers might reasonably refuse to become members of these federations, and in some cases it would be their bounden duty to refuse. How was it possible to federate schools scattered over a wide district of the country and having no bond of sympathy or common action? What was the meaning of the word "unreasonable?" As in the case of "necessitous" schools, the question was referred to the Education Department without a single piece of practical information having been put before them, and without the Department receiving from the House the slightest guidance. His impression was that it would be the Nonconformists who would chiefly suffer from the existence of this sub-section, because a large number of schools of the kind described—scattered schools—were, to say the least, non-Church schools. But he objected to this portion of the Bill, quite as much in the interests of the Churchmen as of Nonconformists. The Committee had had weighty testimony from the hon. Member for West Ham in respect to the feeling with which this proposal was regarded by a large number of Churchmen. Canon Nunn of Manchester, the soundness of whose Churchmanship no one would question, considered that the proposed compulsory federation of schools was impracticable. He believed himself that the friction, bitterness, and practical difficulties that would be occasioned by the attempt to carry out this scheme would have the result of convincing the Education Department that the scheme was altogether impracticable.

Mr. J. A. Pease.

Mr. GRIFFITH said his complaint was that a certain person would be visited with a penalty if he did not do a certain thing, and these associations would be voluntary in the sense that a man acted voluntarily when he gave up his money to a highwayman. What they ought to take into consideration was, would the compulsory association tend to the smooth working of the elementary education of the country. They would say that they would lose the 5s. if they did not associate, and rather than lose the 5s. they would associate.

Mr. SAMUEL EVANS pointed out that the practical working of this sub-section would be to exclude all British schools because the British schools had no religious denomination at all, therefore, they would not be able to avail themselves of the reasonable grant. The

British schools had undoubtedly done good work, and this sub-section ought not to pass in its present form. The Roman Catholics could say they would not come in because the majority was not Roman Catholic, but the British Schools would not be able to avail themselves of that. That was a point which had not been put before the Committee. Then they were told that they ought not to argue against the sub-section because they had opposed the Bill from the commencement. He begged to remind hon. Gentlemen that those willing to give money for the Voluntary Schools protested against the association part of the Bill. He wanted to put two concrete cases to the Government. The first was that of a school which struggled to give efficient education, and for that purpose, to keep up local contributions. Because it kept them up it might, in the eyes of the association, be considered not a necessitous school. The association might say, "You have contributions amounting to 10s. a head, and we do not consider you necessitous." The managers answered, "We want the grant to increase our efficiency, or to provide a second teacher." In a case of that kind, was the reasonable apprehension of such action on the part of an association a reasonable ground for refusing to join it? Again, supposing the managers of a school had joined an association, and the association proceeded to deal with their school on what the managers considered an unfair basis, and on that ground withdrew from the association, would that be considered a reasonable ground for refusal? If the Government really were persuaded *bonâ fide* that the associations were desired by the managers of Voluntary Schools, there would be no difficulty in carrying them on on voluntary principles; but if they were not desired, they ought not to be made compulsory.

*MR. MARK OLDROYD (Dewsbury) wished to confirm the statement made by the hon. Member for West Ham as to the position in which members of the Church of England would be put by the operation of this compulsory sub-section. A clergyman, whose views had been made known to him, was the manager of a parish school, which was attended by children of whom the great majority were the children of Nonconformists. In his desire to retain the goodwill of the parents this clergyman did not insist upon any extreme dogmatic teaching in his school, and he was mortally afraid of this compulsory clause because he believed that if he joined an association his co-religionists would bring pressure to bear upon him to induce him to intensify his dogmatic teaching. If he were to do that he felt that it would alienate from him the parents' sympathy. Now supposing this clergyman was to refuse on these grounds to join the association, would that be considered by the Department a reasonable cause for withholding the 5s. grant from the school?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: The association would have no such power as the clergyman appears to suppose. It is quite a delusion on his part.

*MR. OLDROYD was not satisfied with the answer of the right hon. Gentleman. This clergyman, it was to be presumed, knew his own position, and what awaited him, if once subjected to the clergy of his neighbourhood, who would be associated with him if a federation of schools were made compulsory.

MR. HUMPHREYS-OWEN (Montgomery), most of whose observations could not be heard in the Gallery in consequence of loud and prolonged cries of "Divide," was understood to say that he knew several clergymen who shared the apprehensions of the reverend gentleman referred to by the hon. Member for Dewsbury. Whatever evils might attach to the proposed associations would be intensified if they were made of a compulsory character.

Question put, "That the words of the Sub-section down to the word 'or," in line 6, stand part of the Clause."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 188; Noes, 59.—(Division List, No. 120.)

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY claimed to move, "That the Question 'That the words of the Clause down to the word "The," in page 2, line 11, stand part of the Clause,' be now put."

Question put, "That the Question 'That the words of the Clause down to the word "The," in page 2, line 11 stand part of the Clause' be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 188, Noes, 52.—(Division List, No. 121.)

Question put accordingly, "That the words of the Clause down to the word 'The,' in page 2, line 11, stand part of the Clause."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 186; Noes, 51.—(Division List, No. 122.)

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY moved, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."

Question put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

MUSEUM GRANTS.

Ordered, That Mr. Herbert Lewis be discharged from the Select Committee on Museum Grants.

Ordered, That Mr. Humphreys-Owen be added to the Committee.—(*Mr. Thomas Ellis.*)

REGISTRATION OF PARLIAMENTARY VOTERS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday 2nd April.

MARRIED PERSONS' SMALL INDUSTRIAL INCOMES (TAX RELIEF) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday 10th May.

METROPOLITAN AND OTHER POLICE COURTS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday next.

TRUCK ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

TRUSTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Third Reading deferred till Thursday.

POOR LAW OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION ACT (1896) AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

LICENCES (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday 2nd April.

LICENSING EXEMPTION (HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

And, it being after One of the clock, Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put.

House Adjourned at Three o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 17th March 1897.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS BILL.

Considered in Committee.

[The Chairman of Ways and Means, Mr. J. W. Lowther, in the Chair.]

[Progress, 16th March.—Eleventh Day.]

Clause 1,—

AID GRANT TO VOLUNTARY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

(1.) For aiding Voluntary Schools there shall be annually paid out of moneys provided by Parliament an aid grant, not exceeding in the aggregate five shillings per scholar for the whole number of scholars in those schools.

(2.) The aid grant shall be distributed by the Education Department to such Voluntary Schools and in such manner and amounts, as the Department think best for the purpose of helping necessitous schools and increasing their efficiency, due regard being had to the maintenance of voluntary subscriptions.

(3.) If associations of schools are constituted in such manner in such areas and with such governing bodies representative of the managers as are approved by the Education Department, there shall be allotted to each association while so approved,

- (*a*) a share of the aid grant to be computed according to the number of scholars in the schools of the association at the rate of five shillings per scholar, or, if the Department fix different rates for town and country schools respectively (which they are hereby empowered to do) then at those rates; and
- (*b*) a corresponding share of any sum which may be available out of the aid grant after distribution has been made to unassociated schools.

(4.) The share so allotted to each such association shall be distributed as aforesaid by the Education Department after consulting the governing body of the association, and in accordance with any scheme prepared by that body which the Department for the time being approve.

(5.) The Education Department may exclude a school from any share of the aid grant which it might otherwise receive, if, in the opinion of the Department, it unreasonably refuses or fails to join such an association, but the refusal or failure shall not be deemed unreasonable if the majority of the schools in the association belong to a religious denomination to which the school in question does not itself belong.

(6.) The Education Department may require as a condition of a school receiving a share of the aid grant, that the accounts of the receipts and expenditure of the school shall be annually audited in accordance with the regulations of the Department.

(7.) The decision of the Education Department upon any question relating to the distribution or allotment of the aid grant, including the question whether an association is or is not in conformity with this Act, and whether a school is a town or a country school, shall be final.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon Boroughs) moved, on behalf of the hon. Member for Hornsey (Mr. Stephens), to leave out Sub-section (6) for the purpose of inserting the following Sub-section:—

(6) "The accounts of every school aided out of the aid grant shall be audited by the district auditor, and the enactments relating to audit by district auditors of the accounts of School Boards and their officers and to all matters incidental thereto and consequential thereon shall apply accordingly, with such adaptations as may be made by regulations of the Local Government Board."

At the present moment, he said, there was practically no audit whatever of the Voluntary School accounts, which, in some cases, might be said to be more or less cooked. It was admitted that in the columns for voluntary contributions were included the amounts for the rent of the buildings, which could in no sense of the term be described as voluntary subscriptions. Such an item was not so set down in the case of the School Boards, and it ought to be made perfectly clear what amount really represented the voluntary subscriptions to the school and what represented "cooked" accounts. It came to this, then, that amounts were set down which were really not placed to the credit of the school account. A school was attached to a church, say, and there were collections for it, but the collections were not *bonâ fide* made for voluntary education. They were paid for matters connected with the church or chapel. They were put down as voluntary subscriptions to enable the school to get over the 17s. 6d. limit. He thought, if inquiry were made, it would be found that these voluntary subscriptions to the extent of 50 per cent. were bogus subscriptions. There were charges for coal, lighting, and such like dragged into the account which ought not to be there. Besides that, money which was paid from Imperial sources was not devoted to the maintenance of education at all. The schoolmaster was told that he must not only attend to the education of the school but he must play the organ. He thought the Local Government Board auditor should find out what was paid to the teacher in respect to his functions as teacher and the amount paid to him as organist. It was very important, he should have thought, in the interests of the managers themselves, that there should be an auditor independent of all parties. Charges of a serious character had been levelled against the managers of Voluntary Schools, but he had not the facts at hand. [*Ironical cheers.*] These charges had been submitted to the National Union of Teachers, an impartial body, and if the charges were not true they were libels. Assuming that they were not true, was it not to the interests of the managers that these charges of fraud should be investigated by an independent officer of the Local Government Board? He did not think that clergymen as a rule would shine in the matter of accounts. The accounts should be published, and the public should have free access to them. The hon. Member whose Amendment he moved suggested that they should be dealt with as the School Board accounts were dealt with; but in the case of the Voluntary Schools the accounts were sent up to London, and that was an end of them.

Sir J. SAVORY (Westmorland, Appleby) said the accounts of the Voluntary Schools were open to exactly the same inspection. They were placed outside the schools after they came back from the Department.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE denied that any notice was given.

Sir J. SAVORY said there was notice given as to the time and the day. [*Cheers.*]

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said he was sorry to say he could not agree with the hon. Member. [*Laughter, and a cry of* "Withdraw!"]

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Sir J. Gorst, Cambridge University), who was received with ironical Opposition cheers, read from the Code, which provided that the accounts should be published on the door of the school, and notice given of the days and hours when they might be inspected.

Mr. A. H. DYKE ACLAND (York, W.R., Rotherham) said that was a very different thing from the question of audit. There were the words in the Act which dealt with School Board audit, and they showed the position of the ratepayers in regard to the audit.

*The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS (Mr. J. W. Lowther, Cumberland, Penrith): I must remind the right hon. Gentleman that the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs is in possession of the Committee. [*Laughter.*]

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, continuing, said they were grateful for the intervention of the Vice President, and wished he would enlighten them on other points. The fact was, however, that these accounts were purely balance-sheets, and he made the distinct charge that a good many of them were nothing but bogus accounts. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] A statement was given of so much received and so much paid, but they never got the vouchers for these accounts. What they wanted was to do the same with these schools as with School Boards—to get vouchers for every item, to be able to have a Local Government Board auditor, and to allow any ratepayer of the school district to be present at the audit and to object to an account. In the case of moneys given to officers of the Army, to School Boards, County Councils, and other bodies, every penny that was spent was subjected to the audit of a public official. He begged to move the Amendment.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.) hoped the Committee would not be led off by the hon. Gentleman into a discussion on what was the existing system. They were not considering the existing system, but two alternative methods of altering it. Whether the system were good or bad—and certainly it was not as the hon. Gentleman had represented it—the question before the Committee was whether they would adopt the wider words in this Bill, or the narrower words of the Amendment. He had nothing whatever to say against the excellent work done by the Local Government Board auditors, but if the system were restricted to them in some respects, possibly it would be cumbrous and expensive for the schools. It was open to the Education Department to avail themselves of the services of these auditors, if they thought that the most convenient plan. All they pleaded for was that the Department should not be tied down to that method alone of dealing with the audits of the accounts of Voluntary Schools. The right hon. Gentleman opposite, during his term of office, passed a very useful Act, in 1893, for the elementary education of blind and deaf children, in which it was laid down that the accounts should be audited annually, either by a chartered accountant, a banker, a bank manager, or a professional auditor; and the Education Department was given the same licence in this case, and would probably adopt a similar course to that adopted in regard to the Act of the right hon. Gentleman. He believed that system had worked extremely well and cheaply, and he certainly deprecated forcing upon the Education Department a system which would certainly not be better than any they were likely to adopt, and which might, on the other hand, throw unnecessary expense on the schools and prove cumbrous in working.

MR. ACLAND said the right hon. Gentleman had stated that the system now proposed would be cumbrous and expensive, but why did he not remember that last year? The words of the Amendment were the words which were agreed to by the Government last year in a Bill which gave the same special aid grant, only not quite so much as was given this year. Surely, when this great Government, after careful consideration, had brought in such a provision for all schools last year, it was reasonable to ask why they did not make the same provision in this Bill for Voluntary Schools alone? In his opinion it would give much more satisfaction if the Government would adopt their own words of last year. From time to time cases were brought before the Department where the entries had not been satisfactory, and where the accounts were not altogether in a proper state. Publicity was the one thing that would prevent that, and would also prevent, what was much more desirable, suspicions on the part of people in the villages and elsewhere, that the accounts were not in a thoroughly satisfactory state. Whatever provision was made, he was sure the Education Department would try to do their best.

MR. HENRY HOBHOUSE (Somerset, E.) said he should have thought the right hon. Gentleman would have been quite willing to leave it to the Education Department to make the regulations. The Local Government Board were overwhelmed with work, and perhaps too many duties were thrown upon their auditors already. There was another reason for bringing the audit directly under the purview of an educational authority; what they wanted was not merely the production of vouchers to show that the money had been spent, but they wanted to secure that these additional sums given to the Voluntary Schools should be spent in the right way to attain educational efficiency. ["Hear, hear!"] The best way to do that was to enable the officer of the Education Department to see that these sums were spent in the right way.

MR. HENRY BROADHURST (Leicester) said that they were discussing a proposed expenditure of £620,000 a year, which might, for all they knew, grow vastly under the control of the Government in the next few years, and they were asked to allow this money to be spent by irresponsible people, not one of whom would be properly elected, and who, therefore, would have no sense of public responsibility. All that was asked by the Amendment was that there should be some guarantee that these accounts should not be neglected in the future as they had been neglected in the past. It was his fortune or misfortune to be a member of five practically rural representative bodies, the accounts of which were all subjected to the audit of the Local Government Board, and he could assure the Committee that there was no greater power to secure the proper expenditure of public money than the fear what the Local Government Board auditor would say when he next came round. They did not require in those local bodies any champions of retrenchment and reform in the sense that they were necessary in this House, because of the dreaded visit, and the properly dreaded visit, of this public functionary, who was subject to no local influence, but who came there as the representative of the central Government, and who discharged his duty in a manner which only those who saw it done could appraise it at its proper worth. The hon. Member who had just spoken had expressed a fear that these officers would be unable to meet an increase in their duties. He did not think that that was a point that the Committee ought to consider. The amount of work would be exceedingly small, because those auditors were highly trained, scientific men, and they got through their work with marvellous rapidity and with extraordinary accuracy. All that was asked was that those independent Government officials should be appointed to give to the nation, because the whole nation was interested in the matter, information as to how this public money was expended. If the First Lord of the Treasury could not accept the whole of the Amendment, he might at least give them some hope that at a later stage of the Bill, and in another place, he would have an Amendment introduced which would secure the supervision, if not of the Local Government Board auditors, at least of some accountant of such standing in his profession as would give satisfaction to the taxpayers of the country.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I read out the regulations that had been passed under the Act of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Rotherham, which seemed to me to meet the hon. Gentleman's point.

MR. BROADHURST said that it did not meet his point, because the words were too indefinite. He believed the country would demand that there should be some assurance given that this money would be expended under proper supervision and control.

COLONEL MILWARD (Warwick, Stratupon-Avon) said he did not complain that the hon. Member for Carnarvon should bring forward this Amendment, though he thought the hon. Gentleman had done so with unnecessary vehemence, and with but slight acquaintance with the facts of the case. ["Hear, hear!"] He indignantly denied, on the part of many school managers, that their accounts were bogus or cooked. ["Hear, hear!"] He said, moreover, that the school managers courted the very investigation that the hon. Gentleman desired. ["Hear, hear!"] They had nothing to hide in the matter; their accounts were published, and if the present audit were not sufficient the managers were quite willing that the accounts should be subjected to a further audit. ["Hear, hear!"] The only question was what form should the audit take. It had been suggested that it should take the form of a Local Government Board audit. He thought, however, that a certain amount of elasticity should be left in the matter, as it was left in the Bill; for while the managers desired that there should be a full and complete audit of the accounts, they desired also that that audit should be made as economical as possible. They were not School Boards with unlimited resources behind them—["hear, hear!"]—and as this audit would be a first charge upon the money they received they were naturally anxious that it should cost as little as possible. He thought that if the accounts were sent to one common centre, and a considerable number of them investigated together, that would be sufficient to meet the demand for a full investigation, and have at the same time the advantage of being economical. ["Hear, hear!"]

SIR JOHN GORST said he did not know whether he could now speak as a lawyer, but it was his opinion that, taking the clause as it stood, "may" meant "shall." But, whether he could rely upon his legal reminiscences or not, he could assure the Committee that the Education Department would regard the word "may" in the Bill as equivalent to a positive direction, and therefore if the clause were passed in the form in which it now stood the Education Department would institute an audit of the accounts of all the schools which received the special aid grant. ["Hear, hear!"] He would go a step farther and say that, if it were in accordance with the general wishes of the managers of the Voluntary Schools, the Education Department would make a universal audit of the school accounts throughout the country. ["Hear, hear!"] The only remaining point was whether the kind of audit of those accounts should be left to the discretion of the Education Department, or whether Parliament should take upon itself to prescribe that the audit should be conducted by the district auditors. As a precedent in favour of leaving it to the discretion of the Education Department, there was the Blind and Deaf Children's Act of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Rotherham. Under that Act the discretion was left to the Education Department, and, as his right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury had pointed out, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Rotherham had himself exercised that discretion. The district audit was a very effective one, but it was sometimes a very expensive one. ["Hear, hear!"] And there was no doubt that in the case of the small schools the cost of the audit by the district auditor would be out of proportion to the sums in question. He therefore thought it would be well if Parliament left to the Education Department a discretion in cases of that kind to cause the audit to be conducted by a chartered accountant or a professional accountant as an equivalent to the district audit. The Committee might depend upon it that if they passed the clause in its present shape there would be an audit of the accounts of every school which received any part of the grant; and, further, the Education Department would do its best to make the audit reasonable and effective.

MR. JOHN MORLEY (Montrose Burghs) said that it was a matter of great regret that the Vice President of the Council did not intervene in these discussions more frequently; because, when the right hon. Gentleman spoke, the Committee felt itself in the hands of a Minister who was thoroughly familiar with the details of the subject. [*Opposition cheers.*] Between the language of the Vice President of the Council and the language of the First Lord of the Treasury there was all the difference between the language of an expert and that of an amateur. [*Opposition cheers and Ministerial cries of* "Oh!"] The Vice President said that the Committee of Council would, in this case, undoubtedly construe "may" as "shall." If that were the case, what possible reason could induce the Government not to accept the Amendment? ["Hear, hear!"] About two years ago, when an Irish Bill that was before the House passed through Grand Committee without any Amendment, the present Leader of the House made a very energetic remonstrance on the Third Reading. The right hon. Gentleman then appealed to the sense of general probability in the House as to whether it were likely that the hon. Member for Louth, who drafted the Bill, had been the creature of verbal inspiration. He would ask the same question of the drafting of the present Bill. If the Government were proceeding in the ordinary way, there was no doubt that the Government would at once acquiesce in the substitution of "shall" for "may." It was because this Bill was supposed to be the result of verbal inspiration that not one single Amendment had been accepted. [*Opposition cheers.*]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said that he should not pursue the controversy which the right hon. Gentleman had raised; but he would enter an emphatic contradiction to the suggestion that there was the slightest parallel between the action of a Grand Committee and the action of the Whole House. What he had complained of on the occasion referred to was, that if in a Bill referred to a Grand Committee there were no Amendments, the House as a whole never had an opportunity of discussing the details of the Bill. But, whatever else might be said of the proceedings on this Bill, it would not be said that the House as a whole had been deprived of an opportunity of discussing details. [*Cheers and laughter.*]

MR. J. MORLEY said it was quite true that the right hon. Gentleman on the occasion referred to described the Bill before the Grand Committee as "a long, complicated, and controversial Measure," and this Bill was not long nor complicated. But no one could deny that it was controversial. There were points arising which obviously necessitated differences of opinion, and many criticisms had been offered from the Ministerial side of the House. The words used by the right hon. Gentleman about the procedure on the Bill in Grand Committee were perfectly general, and would just as well apply to the present case. The right hon. Gentleman said:—

> "After all, I will appeal to gentlemen who have some knowledge of Parliamentary practice and procedure, and I ask them whether, in the whole experience of Parliamentary life, they have ever known of a long, complicated, and controversial Measure, so perfect in all its details, so admirably drafted, and so completely covering the ground intended to be covered, that no Amendment, even of an adverb, was inserted in it? . . I have heard of verbal inspiration in another connection, but I never heard it asserted that any draftsman had verbal inspiration in the drafting of a Measure of local government."

[*Cheers.*]

MR. GEORGE LAMBERT (Devon, South Molton) said that the Bill would have had a better chance of being amended in a Grand Committee than in the House.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: I do not think that subject ought to be proceeded with further. It is not really relevant.

MR. LAMBERT said that in the Bill of last year these audits were made compulsory, but that Bill was introduced by the Vice President of the Council, who had now been superseded by a Minister who was not even a member of the Committee of Council. He would in this matter rather follow the lead of the hon. Member for Hornsey, who was a business man, than that of the First Lord of the Treasury. It was most essential that there should be an economic and efficient audit, involving a searching investigation where the expenditure of public money was concerned. The hon. Member for South West Warwickshire said that there was no evidence of these accounts having been cooked. In 1893 the right hon. Member for Rotherham, then Vice President, in answer to a Question, informed the House that the Vicar of Merton, who had died shortly before, had made a statement when dying that for some years he had falsified the school accounts, by attributing fictitious subscriptions to people with their consent.

COLONEL MILWARD: That might occur under any system of audit.

MR. LAMBERT said that it could not go on for years under a system of public audit. It was absolutely necessary in the spending of public money that the public should have the means of knowing that the money was spent as Parliament had intended. The best way to secure that, was to put the audit in the hands of practised men, with full knowledge of the case, like the district overseers.

MR. BRYNMOR JONES (Swansea Boroughs) submitted that Parliament could not do better than adapt the District Auditors Act, 1879, which had worked well for 17 or 18 years, and was perfectly understood by all who took part in local municipal life, to the case of the Voluntary Schools. It would be less expensive and more effective than the employment of a chartered accountant. As to the construction of the word "may" as distinguished from "shall," they had had no opinion from the Attorney General or the Solicitor General. In his opinion the word "may" gave a discretion to the Department. The word, as applied to the functions of a public Department, had never been construed as of a directory or mandatory character, but as conferring a discretion.

SIR FRANK LOCKWOOD (York) suggested that unless there was some objection to amending this Bill in any form, really the reasonable thing would be to substitute the word about which there could not be a shadow of doubt. There had been considerable discussion in the Courts of Law as to whether "may" does or does not mean "shall," but, as far as he knew, there had not been any general direction by the Courts that "may" was equivalent in all cases to "shall." The most recent case of which he had any present knowledge was one decided in 1873, where the question turned upon whether a local authority had power under an Act of Parliament to exempt a ragged school from assessment to a rate, and Mr. Justice Blackburn, afterwards Lord Justice Blackburn, laid it down that the use of the words "may exempt" was intended to give a discretion to the rating authority. Therefore it was clear the two terms were not equivalent in all cases; and, on the point now under discussion, he was of opinion that they left a discretion to the Department.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir ROBERT FINLAY, Inverness Burghs) observed that, in the case cited, it could not for a moment be said that there was any duty on the part of the rating authority to exempt the ragged school from assessment; the words were obviously merely permissive. But here no one could doubt that the Department, having this power conferred upon it, must regard it as its duty to exercise the power. The power was conferred for the purpose of seeing that the accounts were properly kept as one of the conditions of the school getting a share of the aid grant. Possibly a case might be so clear—as if there was only one receipt on one side and one payment on the other—that obviously it would be unnecessary to go through the form of audit; but if there was a case for it, the duty of the Department would be to exercise the power. He would not lay it down broadly that "may" was always equivalent to "shall." He would remind his hon. and learned Friend of the philosopher who held that life and death were the same. A young student came up to him and said, "Then why don't you kill yourself?" The philosopher replied, "Why should I? Life and death are the same." Where was the occasion to make any alteration here?

*Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) hardly thought the illustration of the Solicitor General a very happy one, and, indeed, if anything, it pointed in the direction of making the change. For his part he did not consider the verbal change important, but the Amendment was of immense importance. It was notorious that there had been fraud in the accounts of some of these Voluntary Schools. Many hon. Members had spoken with the men who had committed those frauds, and were familiar with the fact that the accounts had been patched up. The only defence of the Government for this new departure was that the ordinary audit would be too costly, particularly in the case of small schools. In the Bill conducted by the late President of the Local Government Board, the audit by the district auditor of the accounts of the parish council and parish meeting, however small the number of inhabitants, was provided for. Parishes, however small, had their accounts audited in this way because it was the cheapest and most effective method. In fact it was the only real audit of public accounts in the country which could be said to exist. Why, then, not insert a similar provision in this Bill, instead of the intangible audit depending entirely on the will of the Education Department?

Mr. ALBERT SPICER (Monmouth Boroughs) pleaded in support of the Amendment that it was all-important to keep up similarity of procedure with regard to the auditing of accounts in Voluntary Schools and Board Schools. As a member of a School Board, he could testify to the good service rendered on certain points raised by the auditor of the Local Government Board. It was important that the auditors of accounts of School Boards should also come into contact with the accounts of the Voluntary Schools. The Committee ought not to set up more barriers that would make it more difficult to institute a really satisfactory system of national education suited to all classes. If this Amendment were not adopted, there would be two different sets of audits and different systems as well. He therefore hoped that the Government would yield in the matter.

Mr. HUMPHREYS-OWEN (Montgomery) said that the real reason of the difficulty of the Committee was that they assumed the Voluntary Schools to be voluntary organisations which existed solely for the purpose of giving education, and that the Government aided so far as it could. No doubt that was the case 40 or 50 years ago, but now circumstances had altered. They were merely one of the means of educating the whole people, and the result was that where the State provided nearly the whole of the money State control should necessarily follow. The Committee was now seeking to impose on the Voluntary Schools a State control which was the necessary result of their being intrusted with a considerable amount of State money. They did not charge the whole of the school managers with framing bogus accounts; in the majority of cases the work was well done, and the money was honestly spent. But it was necessary to take precautions that the money should be properly expended in all cases. Evidence of this was to be found in the "Hints circulated by the Huddersfield and Saddleworth Church and Day Schools Association." These were given in the final Report of the Elementary Education Commissioners (1888) pp. 339-340:—

> "5. As much as possible the scholars should be encouraged to purchase their own school requisites either of the managers or their deputy, the head teacher. The amount returned from the sale of school material may be reckoned as income.
>
> "8. All accounts for the purchase of school materials should be paid in full, and the discounts received should be entered as items of income.
>
> "10. When the managers provide a residence for the teacher, the latter should pay a rent for the same, and their salaries be correspondingly increased.
>
> "11. All necessary work performed gratuitously on behalf of the school, or gifts in kind, should be paid for, and the amounts returned as donations."

And the minority Commissioners say,

> "In the absence of an official audit and full publicity of accounts, it is possible to charge an apparently high salary as paid to the teacher, and to enter on the side of the receipts a subscription to the school representing the difference between the real and the nominal salary. It is said that teachers have sometimes signed receipts for salaries larger than they

have received. If managers are tempted to commit such frauds they may easily, while the accounts remain unpublished and unaudited, deceive the inspector, who has little time or inclination to examine the accounts minutely. We desire not merely that the accounts of Voluntary Schools should be subject to an independent public audit, but we think they should also be made public in the locality."

As to the difference between "may" and "shall," he said it was very bad drafting not to use words which expressed the meaning completely. Something had been said about the efficiency of posting accounts on the church door. He knew a Voluntary School which was carried on in a little chapel-of-ease on the side of a Welsh hill. What satisfaction could such a posting of accounts be to the general ratepayers of the parish? Half of them did not go to the chapel at all. The only safeguard which the parishioners had was the knowledge that the accounts were not merely to be audited by the managers of schools, but that they were to be audited by an external person of responsibility, and were accessible at all reasonable times at some public place. He hoped that the Government would not show that they appeared to shirk the audit. For what purpose could they wish to screen misdeeds of this kind and to foster the contempt shown by certain managers of anything like popular control?

*Sir HENRY FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) said he desired to point out that the district auditor had now to audit the accounts of every parish in England and Wales. Practically, therefore, the machinery was at hand, and there was no cheaper audit. When he was at the Local Government Board he thought that the fees were much too low, and he thought that higher fees ought to be charged. This audit would be short, simple, and effective, would be guided by uniform rules, and would give satisfaction to the public. If the Vice President would say it should be a real and effective audit by the district auditor the difficulties of the position would be considerably alleviated. He was sure the First Lord of the Treasury would fully admit that under the Bill the bulk of the funds by which Voluntary Schools were supported would be received from public sources. When the rate and the 17s. 6d. limit were removed there would be altogether the equivalent of 30s. or 35s. paid for every child in a public Voluntary School, and surely the public had a right to know that the money was properly spent. At the present time 9d. out of every 1s. spent came from public funds, and practically the effect of the Bill would be to make the proportion 10d. out of the 1s. Surely the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the guardian of the public purse, would see the importance of an official audit? It should not be left haphazard to the chance opinion of well-meaning men, who might have strange financial views as to the disposal of other people's money. To secure public confidence it was desirable there should be an effective audit, and he invited the Vice President or the First Lord to give some indication of what would be the guiding principle of such an audit.

Sir J. GORST said the Committee might be assured that the Education Department would have an efficient, effective audit. He had been asked to give a pledge that, as a rule, the audit should be carried out by the district auditor, and he should be very much inclined to do that were it not for the fact that his predecessor in office, on 28th January, 1895, which, of course, was after the passing of the Parish Councils Act, came to the conclusion that the accounts of schools under the Blind and Deaf Children Act—schools not under School Boards, but under charitable management—should be audited by a chartered accountant, a banker, a bank manager, or a professional auditor. In the face of such a decision taken by his predecessor he did not like to pledge himself without further consideration to an audit conducted by the district auditor. He would undertake that the question of audit should be very carefully considered. The Department had no other object than to have an audit at once efficient and as little burdensome to the schools as possible, and if the district auditor would be cheap that would naturally be the auditor the Department would choose.

Mr. ACLAND said, so far as any previous action of his was a stumbling-block in the way of the Vice President, and if it was what he had done in 1895 prevented the right hon. Gentleman from giving the pledge, he would be happy to confess that he very likely made an error in 1895. [*Laughter.*] He was quite ready to remove that stumbling-block and difficulty out of the right hon. Gentleman's way. He might also point out the difference between the simple accounts of a hundred Board Schools and the accounts of 14,000 Voluntary Schools, which should all be arranged on a uniform system.

MR. W. WOODALL (Hanley) appealed to the Vice President to accept the encouragement of the Committee, and to disregard the comparatively small matter concerned in the Blind and Deaf Schools precedent. The discussion had made clear the desire for an intelligent, uniform, and thoroughly efficient audit. He just mentioned the fact that these school buildings were used not merely for educational purposes, but in many cases as Sunday schools, mission halls, village clubs, and for a number of purposes, and without intention the money might be misused if accounts were not overhauled by an expert auditor accustomed to a regular method of public accounts. The statement of his right hon. Friend left the Government no excuse, and he urged the Vice President to go a step farther and promise a reliable audit by the district Local Government Board auditor.

MR. EDWARD STRACHEY (Somerset, S.) could not understand, if the Government were quite ready to admit there must be efficient audit, why there should be any objection to declaring as much in the Act. The Legislature had thought fit to submit the accounts of Board Schools in rural districts to effective audit, and equally should the funds granted to Voluntary Schools have this safeguard. There should be a statutory audit just as there was in the case of School Board funds derived from public sources, and the auditor should have the same powers to surcharge.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY claimed to move "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 217; Noes, 97.—(Division List, No. 123.)

Question put accordingly, "That Subsection (6) stand part of the clause."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 230; Noes, 100.—(Division List, No. 124.)

On the return of the CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS, after the usual interval,

*MR. J. H. YOXALL (Nottingham, W.) moved, at the end of Sub-section (6) after the word "Department," to insert:—

> "Provided that it shall be the duty of the auditor to disallow any payments for rent, cleaning, warming, or lighting of the school buildings, or for any of these, as are not reasonable and wholly and fairly incurred during or in connection with the use of the premises as a public elementary day school, to disallow any expenditure on salaries and wages not wholly in payment for services rendered in public elementary day schools, and to surcharge any person liable by law to be surcharged with any sum of money which is considered by the auditor to have been unreasonably or improperly so expended."

He said that the object of the Amendment was not to decide who the auditor should be, but with what powers he should be armed, and that the auditor, whoever he might be, should have power to decide whether the amounts charged in the school accounts were of a reasonable and fair nature. The House had already decided that there should be no representative management of Voluntary Schools, which would in itself have been a safeguard against the misappropriation of public money, and the only way in which that could now be secured was by giving the auditor the powers proposed in the Amendment. At the present moment, irrespective of the aid grant, the grant paid to Voluntary Schools was to some extent misappropriated, through large sums being charged by the managers as rent, which in many cases were out of all proportion to the occupation of the premises for something like 26 hours in the week. In one case a school in the North of England, which consisted of 950 children, and which received from the State £1,398, the school expenditure upon furniture, rent, rates, fuel, and lighting, was returned as £965, that was to say that 25s. 9d. per head was spent on the education of the children, and 20s. 2d. per head upon the items he had named. Take the question of furniture and apparatus. He held in his hand a copy of a balance sheet for the year ending April 1896, of a Voluntary School. It was not a Church of England Voluntary School, and he did not wish to suggest that this kind of thing was peculiar to one denomination. He found in the items of expenditure a sum of £77 was entered for books, apparatus, and stationery, and a sum of £26 for furniture and repairs, and he was informed on the best authority that out of this total sum of £103 a very considerable portion represented charges on account, not of the day school, but of the Sunday school, and of meetings held in connection with the place of worship. He found also upon the same account—and he did not bring this forward as at all the most serious or extreme instance he could bring forward—that a rent of £76 was charged for this school. The total voluntary contributions to the school were £5 5s., so that nearly all this £76 was taken away from the school in the shape of rent and paid to the denomination with which the school was connected. In addition to that there was a charge for fuel, lighting, and cleaning of £68. He had no doubt that in this, as in many other cases, that charge included payments for fuel, lighting, and cleaning of the premises for purposes other than those of the day school. There were cases in which payments were put on the *per contra* side. He had on a previous occasion mentioned the case in which an evening continuation school, meeting 20 times per year, paid £20 towards the cost of the fuel, lighting, and cleaning in the day schools account, while the Sunday school, whose numbers were ten times as large as those of the evening continuation school, and met 104 times a year, paid not £20 but £5 a year towards the cost which was charged on the day schools account. He would mention a few other examples, which he could multiply indefinitely, of the way in which, as the income of Voluntary Schools increased these charges increased also, not because the actual cost increased, but because the income was enabled to bear an additional charge. He took the case of a northern Voluntary School, where the rent in 1885 was £250 a year, and in 1895 it had gone up to £350 a year, although the premises were no larger. The intention of the State was that the income of the school should be spent on education and not on the payment of an enlarged rent to the trustees or owners of the property in connection with which the school was established. He was quite aware that, as things had stood in the past, frequently the sums charged on the one side as rent had been returned wholly or in part on the other side of the account as voluntary contributions, and he knew that that had been done in view of the operation of the 17s. 6d. limit. But this limit was now to be abolished, and in future there would be no incentive, and certainly no compulsion, on managers or the trustees of property in connection with which the schools were held, to return to the income of those schools as subscriptions the income they drew from the schools as a charge for rent. Unless they empowered the auditor to decide whether, in the case of any given school, rent ought to be charged, and if so, how much might fairly be charged, they would have sums, which had hitherto been charged as rent and returned to the schools as voluntary contributions, absolutely retained by the trustees or owners of the property in connection with which the school was established. Then there was the case of another northern Voluntary School, in which there were no fees and no subscriptions whatever. There the rent charged was £100 per annum, and this was not returned to the school in the form of voluntary subscriptions, but was used to pay off the mortgage on the property. In another case in which a rent of £125 was charged, the money was also used to defray the mortgage on the property. This was a means of irregularly borrowing from the State. The trustees of a place of worship decided to build a new building for their Sunday school. They borrowed money for that purpose, and they discovered that one of the best ways of paying off the mortgage was to open a day school in those premises, to charge rent for the day school, and to use the rent for paying off the mortgage debt on the property, and so, eventually, after a series of years, to pay for the building, which became the property of the denomination alone, and not in any sense the State's, almost entirely out of State funds provided for the day school and the day school alone. If a Voluntary School were held in trust for the purposes of education, no charge for rent could be made, but there were many Voluntary Schools not in trust, and it was in those schools where these charges were made. It seemed to him that, if it were unfair and improper for a school endowed or held in trust to have a rent charged against it, it was none the less improper that schools opened for education, but not in trust, should have part of their income withdrawn for rent. It was not merely the question of rent, after all. It was the question of fuel, lighting, and cleaning, and the cost of a caretaker. He would give the Committee the case of a Lancashire Voluntary School, where five years ago the charge returned to the Education Department for the apparitor of the school (the cleaner) and his expenses was £50. Two years later it had grown to £80; two years later still to £120; and last year it had gone up to £150. Though the same man did the same amount of work at no greater cost, this amount was abstracted year after year from the money given by the State for education purposes, and not for parochial purposes, proper in themselves, but over which the State had no control. He did not suggest that these things were done for the personal benefit of the managers of the schools. He was bound to say he knew very few cases indeed in which these abstractions of public money were used for private advantage by managers. But it was being done, and he did know of one case in which the whole of the books supplied to the manager's house and family, whether novels or newspapers, or magazines, were charged to the school book account. He knew that kind of thing was rare, but it was not wholly unknown, and it was not wholly without the knowledge of the Education Department. His position was this—the Education Department had already that power to lay down the regulations for an audit which they were supposed to get by this Bill. They had at the present moment exactly the same power as this Bill proposed to give them with respect to the general income and expenditure. They had not in the past used it, and how inadequate and insufficient it had been was shown by the fact that these misappropriations of money in one way or another, upon one item of the accounts or another, did occur in scores and hundreds of cases. He believed the predecessor of the Vice President appointed some three or four years ago an official of the Education Department whose task it was to investigate the accounts of the schools. He would like the results of that investigation laid on the Table of the House in the form of a Parliamentary Paper. He only wished that could be done, for he imagined that the revelations which would then be made public would be sufficient to more than establish his claim that they must do more than secure that there should be an audit, and that the auditor should be qualified for his work. They must give the auditor power to go behind the vouchers and say, "Here is a charge for rent. Is that charge wholly and fairly incurred for the use of the premises as a day school, or is it incurred for other purposes?" There was also the question of the payment of teachers for extraneous tasks. He wanted to acknowledge that the Department had been able under successive Ministries to take certain safeguards, and to strengthen the regulations in regard to this matter. The Vice President had, in the model agreement which he had placed in the Code, done something to prevent in the future the kind of thing of which he was complaining. It was certainly the case that in many instances the fees paid to teachers for extraneous services were included in the salaries paid to them as masters and mistresses of their day schools, and there was no proper power in the auditor's hands to distinguish between the two and to cause the fees for the performance of parochial duties not connected with the school to be separated from the fees and salary paid in respect of the work as teachers in the school itself. He was quite aware that every member of the Committee was as opposed to this kind of thing as he was, and as anxious to prevent it in the future. It was for this reason that he wished to empower the Education Department to see that the auditor should have the power to disallow any payments for the purposes to which he had referred which he considered not to be reasonable and not wholly or fairly incurred in respect of the school itself. Unless the Government consented to something of this kind, and unless the Department in its regulations took care that this provision should be observed, then he ventured to foretell—and he spoke with some knowledge of the subject—that as of the present grant very large sums indeed were diverted from the use of the schools and the purposes of education, so of the special aid grant itself large sums would be diverted to purposes foreign to the purpose the Government had in view. It was for these reasons that he moved his Amendment.

Sir J. GORST observed that the Amendment of the hon. Member was to insert in the Bill a statutory Instruction to the auditor. A very little consideration, however, would show him that such a statutory Instruction was wholly unnecessary, and would not be of any advantage in the audit of public accounts. The Education Department had already not only got the powers which the hon. Member said he was anxious to clothe them with, but they exercised those powers. [" Hear, hear! "] The accounts of the schools were rendered upon forms which were supplied to the managers, and one of the things prescribed in the form of accounts which the manager of every Voluntary School had to render, was that the expenditure which related jointly to day and Sunday schools should be divided between them in proportion to the number of hours per week which each had been used, and the salary entered must be the amount paid to each teacher for services as teacher, and must not include any sums paid to the teacher for any services in any other capacity. [" Hear, hear! "] It would therefore be seen that the auditor who was appointed by the Education Department—even if things were to go no farther than the present regulations—would be bound to see that the charges rendered for rent, cleaning, warming, or lighting, were properly divided between the Sunday and day schools, or any other purpose for which the school had been open, and would be obliged to see that the salaries entered as paid to teachers were actually paid to them for their services as teachers and not for being organists, secretaries of clubs in the villages, or any other purpose. [" Hear, hear! "] He thought the Committee would see that, if the effective audit were carried out in future which he had promised, it was quite clear the auditor who was appointed by the Education Department would, so far as an auditor could do so, secure that the accounts were proper accounts, and would, without any Instruction in an Act of Parliament, carry out the purpose which the hon. Member desired to see effected. [" Hear, hear! "]

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) thought his hon. Friend was well advised in raising the matter in the form he had done. They had received a most important declaration from the Vice President of the Council—whose participation in the Debates they most cordially welcomed—who, he understood, said that when the Bill passed, and when this audit was applied to Voluntary Schools, the instructions of the Department would insure that the audit was an effective one, so that the irregularities to which reference had been made might not occur in the future. If that were so, he thought his hon. Friend had attained the purpose he had in view.

Mr. ERNEST GRAY (West Ham, N.) asked if, under the improved form of audit which he understood the Vice President had promised should be carried out by the Department, it would be possible for the auditor to determine whether the amounts set out in the vouchers submitted to him were of a reasonable character or not? If the auditor had not that power, then these irregularities would undoubtedly continue. He admitted that at present the auditors received full vouchers and statements of accounts, but there was no power to get behind the vouchers to determine whether the amounts had been actually expended or whether they were reasonable. He knew from his own personal knowledge that the matter of rent had in many instances led to very gross abuse on the part of the managers of certain schools. They had held that the charges made for rent had not been reasonable, but he always understood the attitude of the Department had been that the vouchers stated the amounts had been paid, and that they could not go behind the vouchers. Under the new system would the auditor have the power of stopping unreasonable charges although vouchers might be presented? In proof of the fact that, although vouchers were presented, irregularities might and did occur, he mentioned that six or seven years ago, when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dartford was at the head of the Education Department, he had the advantage of drawing his attention to a case in which duplicate receipts had been given by one person for five years to the Local Government Board and the Education Department at the same time; so that the State was paying over money to the schools and the two State Departments were receiving duplicate vouchers for the same expenditure of money. It was not only a gross irregularity, but the schools lost large sums of money year after year. He was anxious that that sort of thing should be completely stopped, because, if not, the greater the amount of money that was given to the schools, the greater would be the irregularity. While it might not be advisable, after the statement of the Vice President, to press the Amendment to a Division, if it were so pressed he should vote for it, because he felt that every effort must be made by the House to see that the Votes of the House were rigidly carried into effect, and money voted for educational purposes was not expended in any other direction. If the right hon. Gentleman could assure them that the auditors could go behind the vouchers to determine whether the expenditure was of a reasonable or unreasonable character, then he thought what the hon. Member for Nottingham desired by his Amendment would be effected.

SIR J. GORST replied that no doubt it would be the duty of the auditor to call attention to any claim that was not really a *bonâ fide* claim for educational purposes, and it would then be the duty of the Education Department to deal with the case of that particular school.

MR. JOHN BRIGG (York, W.R., Keighley) considered that up to the present time the examination of the accounts of the Voluntary Schools had not been of an effective character. Under the Bill they had a possibility of making the audit effective, and he thought they were justified in asking that there should be the same examination into the accounts of the Voluntary Schools as had hitherto existed in reference to the Board Schools. His complaint was that, while they had a mode of audit granted to them, there was no definite form laid down as to how that method of audit should be conducted. What was desired was that there should be an audit on the same principle as when they were dealing with accounts of a similar kind. He thought the district auditor should be the official charged with the duty of auditing the accounts, and then it would, in his opinion, be impossible for the irregularities to again occur to which reference had been made. The present mode of dealing with this matter was very unsatisfactory, and he trusted it would be remedied by the adoption of the Amendment.

MR. HERBERT LEWIS (Flint Boroughs) asked the Vice President of the Council if the Education Department would have any power to impose penalties upon any person who was found, on the auditing of the accounts, to have committed any irregularities?

SIR J. GORST: The Education Department would cut off the grant.

MR. LEWIS hoped the Vice President would see that in some form or other the school accounts were satisfactorily audited. But they could not be properly audited unless the auditor had power to put test questions as to documents submitted to him; otherwise he would be obliged to take those supplied to him without question.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Rochester) said it should be well understood that no Member on the Ministerial side had any sympathy with the kind of irregularities to which attention had been drawn. He asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council to explain what powers the auditors really possessed, and whether, if the auditor found any suspicions of irregularity, he would have power to inquire into it and make a Report to the Education Department?

SIR J. GORST replied that if the auditor noticed any payment that was exorbitant or unreasonable he could call the attention of the Department to it, and further inquiries would be made. If he found that the managers of a school were defrauding the public revenue by making sham payments, it would be their duty to cut off the grant as the most effectual way of putting a stop to such irregularities.

*MR. YOXALL said the reply of the Vice President had been so satisfactory that he would ask leave to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. LEONARD COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin), on behalf of the hon. Member for East Somerset (Mr. Hobhouse), who was temporarily absent, moved at the end of Sub-section (6) to insert the words:—

> "The Education Department may appoint one of their officers to attend the meetings of the governing body of any association formed under this section, but such officer shall not have a right to vote."

The local inspector's knowledge of the schools in the country would be of extreme value and importance to the governing bodies of the associations, and he would bring to their deliberations knowledge which they would not otherwise have. It would be the duty of the governing bodies to examine the wants and circumstances of each school in the association and to determine by comparison of the needs of the different schools which most deserved assistance. The local inspector would bring that comparative knowledge in the most authoritative manner before the members of the governing bodies, and they could not have a better adviser or informer.

MR. HOBHOUSE said there were many precedents which encouraged the Committee to make the provision his Amendment suggested in the Bill. One occurred in the Welsh Intermediate Education Act. In that case the arrangement had worked extremely well, having removed the chance of friction between the county authority and the central department. There was a similar proposal in the Education Bill of last year, although that Bill was not on all fours with this. It was most advisable that the central authority should come into direct contact with the local authority, as it would if the proposal in the Amendment were carried out. It would save time and friction, and be of great practical assistance to the associations and to the Education Department.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said he sympathised with the object of the Amendment, but he thought it would be sufficiently carried out by the Bill as it stood. He believed in most, if not all, cases of the kind mentioned as precedents by his hon. Friend the bodies had executive functions over which a power of supervision was given to the Education Department. [Mr. HERBERT LEWIS: "Not in all."] Then in a large number. He himself looked forward with confidence to the harmonious co-operation of the associations with the Education Department. He rather doubted whether the proposal of his right hon. Friend would produce that harmonious co-operation without which the associations would not work so satisfactorily as they should. Probably in all cases the inspector would be present with the association and would take cognisance of what was done by the associations, but if they were to suppose what he thought the impossible, and what everybody thought the highly improbable, case of an association persistently refusing to admit into their conference an inspector of the Department which, after all, had the power of refusing every one of their decisions, then he thought there would be strong ground of suspicion on the part of the Department that things were being done in the association which would not bear the light. Let the Committee remember that in one sense these associations were the creatures of the Department—in the sense that the Department could cease to approve of them. The Department was not only required to sanction their coming into existence, but if an association misbehaved itself it was in the power of the Department to withdraw its approval, when *ipso facto* the association stood dissolved. Surely that was sufficient power to give to the Department without this unnecessary additional piece of coercion. Everything ought to be done by them in the Bill to make these associations, called into existence voluntarily, retain their voluntary character as far as might be. While he believed, as a matter of fact, that the inspector of the Department would really be cognisant of all that was done by the associations and would work in harmony with them, he thought it might savour of undue interference on the part of the Department if they were, on the face of the Bill, to give the compulsory powers which his right hon. Friend asked for.

MR. GRAY asked if the right hon. Gentleman would kindly point out in what clause of the Bill the Department would have the power to withdraw its approval from an association. ["Hear, hear!"]

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL said that Sub-section (3) of the clause provided that

> "if associations of schools are constituted in such manner, in such areas, and with such governing bodies representative of the managers as are approved by the Education Department, there shall be allotted to each association while so approved," etc.

There the Education Department might withdraw its approval at any time.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE said these words could clearly never be taken to mean that an association should admit to its body an assessor from the Education Department.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL thought his noble Friend misunderstood him. He was disposed to agree that the words would not carry the right to insist that there should be an assessor, but if the Department had reason to suppose that the machinery of the association was being put to an improper purpose, he apprehended it would be perfectly within the power of the Department to withdraw its approval.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE said he did not think that was an explanation which absolutely carried conviction to their minds. [*Opposition cheers.*] He did not think the Department would take that line, but it was more material to consider whether there was an object in having an assessor of the Department on these associations. The associations would have a great many difficult things to do, they would have to draw these schemes under which the money was to be paid to the individual schools, and these schemes must be subject to a number of elaborate rules, as to what necessitous meant, as to due regard being had to the maintenance of subscriptions, and how endowments were to be treated. As these were matters of the greatest difficulty and complexity, he thought the simpler method would be to have an assessor from the Education Department sitting with the association, who could explain to them in detail what the real views of the Department were. He felt convinced that his hon. and learned Friend would not insist that the Education Department had any power to withdraw the approval it had granted to an association, except on the conditions stated in the clause, and so long as it was administered in conformity with the Act.

MR. J. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) said that, whether the Bill were called vague or elastic, it was clear that the associations would have to make up their minds on many questions of great difficulty, and it would be a great advantage to them if an experienced representative of the Department were present. Moreover, when the Department had in the last resort to examine these schemes their assessors would then be able to explain what were the principles on which the associations had drawn them up, which would be a gain to the Department. There existed, rightly or wrongly, a good deal of apprehension about the associations in the minds of many managers of Voluntary Schools, and also among the clergy. The apprehension was that these associations would tend to fall into the hands of a small number of persons, and would tend to become arbitrary in their methods in the endeavour to introduce uniformity. It would very much reassure the managers if they knew that there would be a representative of the Department present. He would call the attention of the Committee lastly to the fact that this was exactly the line of the recommendations of two Royal Commissions. As far back as 1868 the Royal Commission on the Schools Inquiry recommended that there should be an efficient district Commissioner, who should have an educational seat on every one of the district Boards.

MR. WILLIAM AMBROSE (Middlesex, Harrow) said that the Amendment, however well intended, was really calculated to do mischief. He quite agreed that it was important that the associations should have the assistance and the advice of some officer from the Education Department now and then, when some difficult question arose; but if such officer had the right to be always present at meetings of the associations he would become a sort of spy upon the associations; and, what was worse, it would tend to destroy the independence of the associations, because the members would be afraid to go against the opinion of the officer of the Education Department, and they would justify any determination they might come to in any matter by saying that it had the sanction of the representative of the Department.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee) said that under Sub-section (4) the money allotted to each association must be distributed in accordance with the scheme prepared by that association, and approved by the Education Department. That meant that the money could not be distributed unless on a scheme sanctioned by both the association and the Department. Surely, then, it was most desirable that steps should be taken to bring about that essential agreement between the association and the Department, and he could see no better agency for that purpose than the presence of an official of the Department at meetings of the association held to prepare a scheme.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL said that if the scheme of an association did not meet with the approval of the Department, the money would be distributed by the Department.

MR. E. ROBERTSON doubted whether that could be done. In his opinion, reading Sub-section (4), the money must be distributed according to the scheme drawn up by the association and sanctioned by the Education Department. Therefore it would be necessary to have an officer of the Department present at the meetings of the association, with a view to bring about that essential agreement.

Mr. GRAY was glad to hear the assurance that the Education Department would have the power to withdraw its approval from any association that was not satisfactorily conducted. In regard to the Amendment, he would point out that he believed it was contrary to the practice and traditions of the Education Department that its inspectors should appear to interfere in the slightest way with the management of the schools, or that they should ever attend the managers' meetings. Therefore, unless some power were given, either in the Act or by a public instruction of the Department, the inspector would never think of associating himself with an association, and the association would never think of inviting the inspector to attend their meetings. Power was given under the Technical Instruction Act to local technical instruction committees to co-operate with the inspector of schools for the district, and they often found him a most useful member. If that precedent were followed in the present case, if the inspector were allowed to associate himself with the association, it would tend to rapidity and economy in the construction of schemes.

Mr. HERBERT LEWIS said that the presence of the educational assessors on the Welsh intermediate education bodies during the past seven years was most valuable. Those gentlemen were educationists of great skill and practical experience, with a thorough knowledge of the laws relating to education, and the great benefits which had accrued to the cause of education in Wales through the presence of those gentlemen on the bodies ought to induce the Committee to accept the Amendment. These associations would be new to their work, and he thought that the presence of an official from the Education Department at their meetings was necessary, not only in the interest of the associations, but of the Department itself. The associations would not be able to meet frequently, they would have to communicate constantly with the Education Department, and it would be utterly impossible for them to carry out the regulations, however clear they were, with that full knowledge of the views of the Department which was so essential. He resented the suggestion of the hon. and learned Member for Harrow that these officials would be spies in any sense or form. In them the associations would find important and valuable auxiliaries.

Mr. JEBB (Cambridge University) said that while he fully appreciated the value of guidance of the associations from the Education Department, he felt very strongly that the presence of an official representative of the Education Department when the associations were engaged in framing schemes would tend to restrict the free initiation of the associations, and that, therefore, the schemes would come before the body which was charged with the ultimate revision, already prejudged from an official point of view.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said that the First Lord of the Treasury, in declining to accept the Amendment, raised a very important point. The right hon. Gentleman said that if the proceedings of the associations were such as not to commend their work to the Education Department, the Department would have the right to dissolve the associations. Was that so or was it not? He asked the Solicitor General to point out a single section, subsection, or syllable in the Bill which entitled the Department to dissolve an association.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL said he quite agreed with the view of his right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury. The approval of the Department was necessary in the first instance to the manner of the constitution of the area and of the governing body. He understood the hon. Member for Carnarvon was of opinion that even if an association were guilty of gross misconduct, the Education Department would not be at liberty to withdraw their approval. Such a view as that did not commend itself to common sense, and would not commend itself to any court of law.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: The Bill is not based on common sense.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL said that if an association misconducted itself, of course the Department would be able to take the fact into account—[Mr. Lloyd-George: "Where is the power?"]—as to whether they should or should not continue their approval. The persistent refusal to allow an inspector to attend when his presence would be desirable would be one element to be taken into account.

Mr. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) thought that it would be well that an association might be able to invite one of the officers of the Education Department to attend a meeting. It was, however, another matter altogether to say that the Education Department might order one of their officers to attend. Words might advantageously be inserted in the clause providing that an officer would attend, if it were desired by an association that he should attend.

*Sir HENRY FOWLER understood the First Lord of the Treasury objected to the presence of inspectors of the Education Department at meetings of associations on the ground that the Education Department would have ample power over the association, and that if an association acted in disregard of the view of the Department, the Department would withhold the grant, and, *ipso facto*, the association would be dissolved. He agreed with the construction which the First Lord of the Treasury placed upon the words of the clause in this respect. The words of the clause were:—

> "If associations of schools are constituted in such manner in such areas and with such governing bodies representative of the managers as are approved by the Education Department, there shall be allotted to each association while so approved——"

while so approved by the Education Department. Therefore the association was not a permanent body which was to have allotted to it money totally independent of the Education Department. When they came to Sub-section (4), they found the words:—

> "The share so allotted to each such association shall be distributed as aforesaid by the Education Department after consulting the governing body of the association, and in accordance with any scheme prepared by that body which the Department for the time being approve."

That meant that the Department might at one time approve and at another time disapprove. He thought power was completely reserved to the Department to deal with an association as they thought proper. If the Education Department had not that power, where would be the responsibility to Parliament? As to the presence of an inspector at meetings of an association, the hon. and learned Member for Harrow appeared to think that that would be an entirely new departure, and that it would be a very dangerous subordination of the authority of the local association to the central Department. The hon. and learned Gentleman must have forgotten the administration of the Poor Law, in pursuance of which an inspector of the Local Government Board attended meetings of boards of guardians when important questions were to be discussed. There was nothing novel in the present suggestion. It was not only linking the authority of the Department with the local authority of the association, and there was nothing which would tend more to promote that uniformity of principle throughout the whole kingdom than the presence of inspectors would secure at the meetings of the associations.

Lord HUGH CECIL (Greenwich) asked whether there was any process by which, if the Department made a mistake, they could be called to account?

The SOLICITOR GENERAL replied that the decision of the Department would be conclusive.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 266; Noes, 111.—(Division List, No. 125.)

Question put accordingly, "That those words be there inserted."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 119; Noes, 263.—(Division List, No. 126.)

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: I claim to move "That the Question, 'That Clause 1 stand part of the Bill,' be now put." [*Ministerial cheers and Opposition cries of* "Oh, oh!" *and* "Gag."]

Mr. HERBERT LEWIS: Why don't you closure the whole Bill?

Question put, "That the Question 'That Clause 1 stand part of the Bill' be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 259; Noes, 112.—(Division List, No. 127.)

Question put accordingly, "That Clause 1 stand part of the Bill."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 279; Noes, 107.—(Division List, No. 128.)

Clause 2,—

REPEAL OF 17s. 6d. LIMIT IN s. 19 OF 39 AND 40 VICT. c. 79, AS RESPECTS DAY SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND AND WALES.

2. "After the *last day of March one thousand eight hundred and ninety-seven,* the following words in section nineteen of the Elementary Education Act, 1876, namely, 'such grants shall not in any year be reduced by reason of its excess above the income of the school if the grant do not exceed the amount of seventeen shillings and sixpence per child in average attendance at the school during that year, but shall not exceed that amount per child, except by the same sum by which the income of the school derived from voluntary contributions, rates, school fees, endowments, or any source whatever other than the Parliamentary grant, exceeds the said amount per child, and,' shall be repealed so far as they apply to day schools in England and Wales."

Whereupon Motion made, and Question, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again"—(*Sir Henry Fowler*)—put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

COAL MINES REGULATION BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday, 31st March.

ACCESS TO MOUNTAINS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday next.

CORN SALES BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday 12th May.

PARISH REGISTERS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday next.

BUILDING FEUS AND LEASES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday 7th April.

REGISTRATION OF FIRMS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday next.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS (IRELAND) (WOMEN) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday.

ALIENS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday next.

WORKING MEN'S DWELLINGS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday 26th March.

SOLICITORS (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday next.

APPOINTMENT OF HIGH SHERIFFS (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday next.

RIVERS POLLUTION PREVENTION BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday next.

LONDON WATER COMPANIES AMALGAMATION BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday 5th April.

TITHE REDEMPTION BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday next.

SOLICITORS' (MAGISTRACY) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday next.

SUPPLY.

Committee deferred till Friday.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Committee deferred till Friday.

LICENSING EXEMPTION (HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

ROYAL NATIONAL LIFEBOAT INSTITUTION.

Select Committee appointed to inquire into the administration of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, and into the adequacy of its organisation for saving life on our coasts.—(*Sir R. U. Penrose FitzGerald.*)

House Adjourned at Twenty-five Minutes before Six o'Clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 18th March 1897.

ISLE OF MAN (CHURCH BUILDINGS ACTS) BILL [H.L.]

The PRIME MINISTER (The Marquess of Salisbury), in moving the Second Reading of this Bill, said: The object of this Bill is a very simple one. The Church Building Acts, as everyone knows, are remarkable, as many English Acts of Parliament are, for the labyrinthine intricacy of their provisions, and most erudite lawyers have difficulty sometimes in saying exactly what they mean. But in the Isle of Man there is the additional difficulty that nobody knows what Church Buildings Acts apply to the Isle of Man and what do not, so, practically, things are at a standstill because they do not know whether action can be taken under the authority of the Church Buildings Acts, or under their local Legislature. When this difficulty was brought before the Ecclesiastical Commissioners they recommended that the simple course should be taken of withdrawing the Isle of Man altogether from the operation of these Acts, of course validating any transactions which have already taken place. In accordance with that recommendation, Mr. Asquith, in the late Government, introduced a Bill to that effect, but in the crowd of more attractive and difficult legislation the Bill failed to get through. I think it was introduced twice, and I propose now to make a third effort. If the Bill dies it will be simply because it is not interesting enough. I cannot conceive that anyone can see any objection to handing over to the Legislature of the Isle of Man the management of its Church building affairs—at least the only objection I can imagine is that it may be said that it is a distinct piece of Home Rule legislation.* [*Laughter.*]

Read a Second time (according to Order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House To-morrow.

SURVEYORS (COUNTY DUBLIN) BILL.

Read 2ª (according to Order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House To-morrow.

WORKING MEN'S DWELLINGS BILL [H.L.].

Amendments reported (according to Order).

The Marquess of LONDONDERRY moved that the Report of Amendments be now received.

Motion agreed to.

The Marquess of LONDONDERRY said the Amendment which he proposed to move was a very simple one, and was moved after the Bill had been dealt with by the Standing Committee, and after consultation with his noble Friend who represented the Local Government Board. His noble Friend had pointed out that the Bill as drafted empowered the local authorities to do what they liked with the house, but it did not give them any authority to obtain possession of that workman's house. Consequently, at his request, he moved as an Amendment the necessary words which gave the local authority power to possess themselves of the house. Sub-section (2) of Clause 3 was as follows:—

> (2.) If any such condition is broken, the local authority may, after giving the owner an opportunity of remedying the breach, if it is capable of remedy, cause the dwelling-house to be sold.

He moved after the word "sold" to insert the words:—

> "And the owner shall thereupon become the tenant-at-will of the local authority."

Amendment agreed to; Bill to be Read the Third time To-morrow.

LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT 1881.

The Duke of ABERCORN asked the Prime Minister whether Her Majesty's Government could consent to the appointment of a Commission for Inquiry into the working of the Irish Land Act of 1881. He said that in asking this question he thought he ought to tell their Lordships that a deputation of the Irish Landowners' Convention waited upon the Prime Minister last week and begged that an inquiry might be made into the Land Act of 1881. The Prime Minister then replied that he was unable to give any definite answer until he had consulted his colleagues in the Cabinet. He hoped that on the present occasion the noble Marquess might be able to give them a satisfactory answer.

*THE DUKE OF ARGYLL: My noble Friend at the head of the Government has allowed me to interpose for a few minutes. I had expected that the noble Duke who asked this question would have said something in support of it, but not having done so I am thrown back upon what I have no doubt most of your Lordships have read—the conversation which took place between a deputation of Irish landowners last week and my noble Friend at the head of the Government. My noble Friend then spoke necessarily under very great reserve. It was not possible for him to express an opinion offhand upon a proposition of that nature, and he was not in a position to express any opinion upon the Land Act or upon its workings. At the same time, my noble Friend did say some very striking things, and on the whole he certainly encouraged the landlords of Ireland to make known their case. He spoke of silence being inexpedient, and he seemed to indicate that possibly some blame might have attached to the landlords of Ireland for not having put forward their case more prominently than they had yet done. But still more, my noble Friend spoke of the ignorance which exists in England as to the Land Act and as to its working now. I rose mainly for the purpose of saying that I entirely agree with my noble Friend in these observations. It is now a good many years since I have had the honour of addressing this House upon the subject of Irish agrarian legislation, and I should have been very glad if I had never been called upon to say a word on the subject again. For a good many years I felt there was nothing to be said and nothing could be done, but I should be ashamed of myself at this crisis in the fate of the Irish landlords if I did not say a few words on what I believe to be the truth—namely, that the people of this country have no idea of what has been and is going on in Ireland or of the principles which underlie transactions in regard to the Irish Land Act. ["Hear, hear!"] Nothing could be more absurd than for any body of men, such as Irish, or English, or Scotch landlords, or any other class, to come before Parliament and say, "Our interests are suffering; our values are depreciated; we have lost a good deal of rental, and we ask you to inquire into it." Nothing could be more absurd than such a proposition if the diminution of values arose from a purely economic cause. I expected my noble Friend to tell us, what I believe to be true, that the reductions going on in Ireland now amount to more than 50 per cent. of the value in many cases—["hear, hear!"]—50 per cent. in some cases not only below the old rent, but below the rent fixed by the first Commissioners. I have myself, in many cases, suffered more than a loss of 50 per cent. on some particular farms, but then I know, and the English landlords know, that that is part of the course of nature; that reductions arise justly and necessarily out of economic conditions. What the landlords of Ireland know is that their reductions do not happen naturally. ["Hear, hear!"] They happen out of arbitrary and licentious power given to certain individuals in Ireland to deal with their property as they please, without giving rhyme or reason for what they do. [*Cheers.*] That is the peculiarity of their case, and I do not think that the English people understand that to be their case—they do not understand the facts of the case. My noble Friend at the head of the Government in that conversation said that the public generally ought to be informed of what was being done by the Commissioners. Yes; but the English people should be reminded of what they have done themselves through their Government and Parliament. I never can get anybody who has not looked into these matters carefully and has not been a party to the discussions upon them to believe this most astounding fact—that in 1881 the Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland, representing as it is supposed a civilised Government, handed over to three men in Ireland—I called them triumvirs at the time—falsely called Judges, for they were in no sense Judges, the power of disposing of the whole of the landed property in Ireland precisely as they pleased as between landlord and tenant. [*Cheers.*] It was a lawless, and arbitrary, and an entirely irresponsible power, from which there was no appeal. The Irish landlords complain that their rents have been reduced 50 per cent. They have been very mercifully dealt with if they have not been reduced 100 per cent. It was equally in the power of these Commissioners—and I want to drive this into the heads of the people of this country—to deprive them of the whole of their rent. It is asserted that some of these reductions amount practically to prairie value. I am not saying that that is the case, but I do say there is a case for inquiry. You have given an arbitrary power over the property of every Irishman connected with land in that country which you are bound to watch the operation of. If this sort of thing is allowed to go on with property we shall very soon see it extended to personal liberty and even to life. There are three great kinds of punishment in this country—punishment by fine, punishment by imprisonment, and punishment by deprivation of life. You have given to these men the complete power of fining to the extent of the complete confiscation of property both of the landlord and the tenant, for remember that the power extends to the tenant as well as to the landlord, and he is only protected by the known bias of those who administer the law. The tenants do actually complain that they are wronged; it is not only the landlords who are dissatisfied, but the tenants are equally dissatisfied, and for this reason, that it is known that these judgments rest upon no law and upon no principle that can be explained or defended. There is a circumstance about this arbitrary power that is not generally remembered. I think even my own colleagues do not remember it. I wonder whether Lord Kimberley, who was a colleague of mine, remembers it. Bad as I thought the Bill was when it was introduced, so bad that I could not be a party to it, I rejoice to say, and I have rejoiced more and more every year—bad as the Bill was when it was introduced, it was not originally so bad as it was when passed. As it left the Cabinet and as it was introduced by Mr. Gladstone, it was a Bill which did not give arbitrary power to these men; it was a Bill which defined the principles on which they were to value land. Does my noble Friend remember that? [The EARL of KIMBERLEY: "I do not."] I do not think he does. [The EARL of KIMBERLEY: "No."] I have never met a human being who remembers it. Not only was it there, but Mr. Gladstone made a great fuss about it—a tremendous splash in the House of Commons. He reproached the Opposition at that time for not being willing to commit themselves to the principle, and he said, "we acknowledge it to be the duty of the Government to lay down a principle upon which these men are to act." The Commissioners were to act upon a certain principle. What was that principle? It was the principle—the common principle—by which all assessments are raised in England, that market value was to be the basis of rent. If that clause had been kept in, the law would have been comparatively harmless, for you would have a known standard to which you could refer. This is the clause:—

> "A fair rent means such a rent as, in the opinion of the Court, after hearing the parties, considering all the circumstances of the case, holding and district, a solvent tenant would undertake to pay one year after another."

That is the familiar phraseology of all our assessment Acts. Assessments in England are all raised upon rateable value, and the basis of rateable value is letting value. In Scotland we levy our rates upon actual rents, in England it is called rateable value, but in both cases the assessors are bound to take as the basis of their assessment the market value of the holding. If that clause had stood it could not have been said of these men, as I say of them now, that they are not Judges, that they do not constitute a Court, that their rents are not judicial rents, but they are a revolutionary tribunal and their findings are not justified by any known principle of law. Why was the clause dropped out of the Bill? I have searched the Journals of the House of Commons and I cannot find the date exactly when the words were given up, but I do not think anybody saw what the effect of the elimination of the words would be. The Government found that the Irish Members, with whom they wished to curry favour, disliked the very idea of a letting, or market values being taken, as the foundation for the action of the Commissioners. Irishmen like arbitrary power when they expect it to be exercised in their own favour, and they pressed the Government to give up the words, and the Government, finding it difficult to carry them through silently, let them go. The effect of that was at one blow to sever the whole rental of Ireland from the improvement of the country. Not a farthing was laid out upon Irish land by the landlords after they discovered this. Could a greater curse be inflicted upon any agricultural country than to separate its whole rent from the improvement of the soil? ["Hear, hear!"] It has often been said, "Oh, Irish landlords never did improve." A falsehood, an absolute falsehood. [*Cheers.*] In 1881 the landlords made applications for loans for the improvement of their estates to the extent of upwards of a million sterling. By the end of the year they had begun to discover the trap into which they had been led, and the applications fell to £500,000 in the second year, and in the third year they disappeared altogether. No Irish landlord is now such a fool as to lay out a single shilling on land which is occupied by a tenant. I beg your Lordships to consider what is the position in which the valuators of land in Ireland are placed. The whole object of the Act of 1881 was that there should be no eviction, and therefore the Commissioners, instead of fixing a fair rent lest it should lead to an eviction, were often driven to bring down the rent to the level of the slipshod barbarism of the tenant. It is difficult to get an idea of what principle the Commissioners are working upon, but occasionally a conversation in one of the Courts, as they are called, affords a little information. I will give you two cases which I believe to be typical. One is the case of a Sub-Commissioner, before whom came a poor man with a small holding, I think of £9 a year. It had come to the knowledge of the Sub-Commissioner that the man had actually paid a short time before £170 for the holding. The Sub-Commissioner said to the man, "Why did you give such an enormous sum for this wretched piece of land." At first the tenant denied that he had bought the holding, but ultimately confessed that he had. The Sub-Commissioner was inclined to be indignant with the tenant, and said,

> "When you Irishmen will go about and pay these enormous amounts for wretched bits of land there is no dealing with you."

Afterwards, however, he took compassion on the man and reduced his rent 30 per cent. That is to say he fined the landlord for the folly of his tenant. [*Laughter.*] I will give another case. One of the evils of this law, this barbarous law as I shall never cease to call it, was this, that, although the three first Commissioners were gentlemen of high character and reputation, it was evident to me that whenever a vacancy happened there would be an appointment by the Government of the day prompted more or less by political considerations. Very fortunately nobody did die in that Commission until quite lately. My noble Friends opposite were in power, and, of course, they filled up the vacancy by a friend of their own, that is to say, by a friend of the tenants. What happened? One of the first questions which came before them was that of a tenant, who asked for a reduction of his rent.

Earl SPENCER: What year?

*The Duke of ARGYLL: Three or four years ago. It turned out that the lease dated from 1781, and everyone knows that land in Ireland then was at a lower price than now. After considering the case the new Commissioner laid down his principle in some such terms as these:—

> "It is very true that he and his forefathers have been in the enjoyment of this land since 1781. It may, perhaps, have been worth more, but still we must bear in mind that the tenants have kept it in tillage. If they had not it would have gone back; therefore he ought to be paid for that"

—for cultivating his own land! This was one of the new Sub-Commissioners, appointed, of course, by the Party opposite. There was, however, an appeal to the whole triumvirate, and they were shocked with the conduct of their brother, and his decision was overruled. They made something like an indignant protest against the action of the new Commissioner. That is the way your law is working, and that is the way it will work unless it is amended. Whenever there is a vacancy in the Commission there will be pressure put on the Government of the day to appoint a man of their own kidney, whether towards the landlords or tenants. It will be political jobbery from beginning to end. ["Hear, hear!"] That is what you have, by this horrid law, stereotyped and imposed upon the Irish people for ever. Look at the elections for Members of the House of Commons. Is it not notorious that the tenants are voting for the men who they think will appoint Commissioners who will reduce their rents? Was there ever such an element of corruption introduced into the blood of any people. ["Hear, hear!"] I must refer for a moment to the vote of this House. I was not present last year—I was ill—when the discussion took place. I regretted very much that my noble Friend at the head of the Government and his colleagues had not determined that in their new Bill they would restore to the Act some such clause as that which Mr. Gladstone had so improperly let go. That would have been no repeal of the Act, but I could not get some of my Irish Friends to understand its importance. Several of them told me that they would not like the Commissioners to have the power to decide what reduction should be made from the market value. They have that power now; and not only that, they first find out the value, and what the reductions are to be besides. [*Laughter.*] However, in this House my noble Friend succeeded in securing this, that the Commissioners were to state what the value was. He did not, indeed, dictate, as Mr. Gladstone intended to dictate, but he did require them to give the grounds and the principles on which they proceeded. That was carried by a large majority in this House, and it went in the direction of restoring the principles of civilisation and of restoring the principle of a really legal judgment to the Courts of the Commission. It is still, however, in the breast of the Judges entirely to fix the rent, and I am very much afraid that that clause which you ultimately agreed to has not produced the effect that was anticipated. The "pink paper," which at first I did not understand, is intended to show the grounds of the valuation of the Commissioners, but it does not give the data which would enable you to judge. Here is a case of 32 acres, of which 20 is good arable land. All that the Commissioner enters on the pink paper is that the land is "gravelly and clayey." There is no information here. Pure gravel is useless and pure clay also, but clay and gravel mixed may be the richest soil in the world, but this does not tell you how the facts stand. He values that at 17s. 6d. an acre. It is one of the delusions of the people of this country, which I cannot account for, that under the Act of 1881 the Irish people were secured for ever in comparatively cheap land. That is an absolute delusion. Cheap land was given to those who were holders at the time and to their families, but the dearest possible land was imposed as regards all new comers into the farms. Existing tenants were relieved from the limitations put on the selling value of tenant right. In the north of Ireland the landlords, although they had been extremely careless in allowing tenant right to rise to the degree that it did, nevertheless felt it their duty to impose limitations so that the incoming tenant should not come in a hopelessly mortgaged man. ["Hear, hear!"] On most estates there was a limitation. As far as that went it was a provision for a cheap rent for the tenant coming in. The first thing Mr. Gladstone did was to strike down that limitation. A trumpet voice was sounded in the first section of the Act—the tenant was to take the highest price he could get in the market. That was what prevented cheap land passing from one generation to another. It raised prices for those who were not in possession to the maximum. Are these not matters which should be inquired into by some means or other? Undoubtedly they are; whether by a commission—commissions are somewhat discredited at the present moment—or a Committee of this House I do not venture to say. I am disposed to think that a Committee of this House, although open to many objections—we should be told it would be a committee of landlords—yet, if it was so constituted as to examine landlords and tenants, and report upon the actual operation of the Act in this respect, it might have an important effect on the opinion of the country. I, therefore, hope that my noble Friend will act on the principle that he has laid down, that some opportunity should be given to the landlords of Ireland to make plain their case. That is not only the interest of the landlord and tenant, it is the interest of all who are concerned as to constitutional government. If this precedent passes into law as to the properties of men, why may it not be extended to their lives and liberties? I hope we shall not live to see the day when my noble Friend opposite will come forward, with benignant grace, to propose some such scheme as that. In case that day should ever come, I should certainly hope that my noble Friend will afford some opportunity to the landlords of Ireland—and to the tenantry of Ireland, for they are equally dissatisfied and equally entitled to be so, because there is no principle to go upon —to see how far this legislation has worked for the benefit of the people of Ireland and for the instruction of future ages. ["Hear, hear!"]

THE PRIME MINISTER (The MARQUESS of SALISBURY): I shall not follow my noble Friend in his very interesting review of the Land Act and its working. I have often expressed in this House sentiments of a very similar character, and I have never seen any reason to change one of them; but this is not the opportunity in which I can discuss the Land Act. I am rather asked to discuss the working of the Land Act, and to furnish means of ascertaining whether in its operation and its administration it has been carried out so as to fulfil the intentions which Parliament had when they passed it. I cannot say that there is any want of case for such a request. The whole of the circumstances are to the Saxon eye somewhat inscrutable and obscure; but this at least is quite clear—that the landlords are very discontented with the working of the Act, and the tenants are also discontented with the working of the Act, and I do not know that you can say that an Act in that position is precisely working in a satisfactory manner. Therefore, if I had the other day any hesitation in accepting the proposal of my noble Friends it was not from any doubt that great cause for an investigation exists, or from being at all convinced that the great injustices that many of us foresaw are not in fact being carried into effect, but it is on account of the extreme difficulty of providing machinery by which such an investigation could be carried on. I had to point out the other day that the machinery of a Royal Commission, as we understand it, works badly for the ascertainment of the truth in highly-controverted questions. We are in the habit too much of constructing them on the happy family principle, under which persons differing as much as possible are put into the same room and told to agree. [*Laughter.*] I do not think that in highly-controverted questions that method of investigation is likely to be successful. Unluckily this question has been now for 25 years before us, and it has been intensely controverted, and I imagine it is very difficult to find anybody in public administration, or anybody in public life whose opinions are not already well known, or, at least, whose opinions cannot be diverted from the surroundings in which he has lived. Therefore, if a Commission was constructed of persons to whom that would apply, it would inevitably be said that we were appointing a packed Commission. I feel I am unable to give at present a definitive answer. I will not bind the Government not to appoint a Commission, but at this moment I frankly confess I have not been able to see my way to a Commission that would be satisfactory; but I wish to reserve full liberty to the Government at a somewhat later period to enter on an investigation of that kind if in its judgment the public interest can be served by it. As to the other modes of investigation to which my noble Friend has referred, I think it is easy to give a simpler answer. I think a Committee of this House would, no doubt, not be able to examine with anything like generality or width into the whole area of the question referred to; but still, when a number of noble Peers assert to us that these grievances exist, and that an Act passed by this House is not carried out in the way in which it was intended to be carried out, and that they think that an investigation of these suggestions is desirable, I think they have a right to ask it, and I do not think we ought to refuse it. If my noble Friends behind me choose to move for a Committee, and will undertake a Committee in this matter, the Government will not resist them; but I do not say for a moment that I look upon an investigation of that kind as an adequate substitute for an investigation by an effective Royal Commission. My doubt is that an effective —a perfectly impartial—Commission can at this moment be established, but I have not the least doubt that a certain amount of aid will result from a Committee of this

House, as it did result from the action of a similar Committee appointed on the Motion of Lord Donoughmore 15 years ago. That statement, however, is not an answer to the question of my noble Friend. He makes no allusion to a Committee. He speaks merely of a Royal Commission. I have only to answer that, as at present advised, the Government do not see their way to the appointment of such a body, but they reserve to themselves the liberty of agreeing to such an appointment at a later period if they think it desirable. ["Hear, hear!"]

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY said that in dealing with this subject he wished to look at the matter not as a landlord, but as a real lover of Ireland. He wanted to prove to their Lordships, in the first place, that in the interests of the land-owning class in Ireland were involved the interests of Ireland as a whole; in the second place, he wished to bring before their Lordships the present condition of the land-owning class; and, in the third place, to endeavour to prove that with the ruin of the land-owning class must be bound up the absolute ruin of Ireland itself. It was a very popular and fallacious idea, which was especially held in England, that those Members of their Lordships' House who were connected with Ireland represented nothing but the landlord interest. The interest they represented was far larger. They represented the land-owning interests in all parts of Ireland, and with those interests were bound up the interests of a very large number of people, who, though they might not be owners of land, were either directly or indirectly connected with the land. There were the mortgagees, many of whom were philanthropic and religious societies, great commercial bodies, bankers, and insurance companies, and there were the labouring classes who owed their very livelihood to their connection with the land. He agreed with the noble Duke that the position of English and Scotch landowners was entirely different to that of the Irish landowners, but, were the condition of agriculture in Ireland as depressed as it was in some parts of England and Scotland, the Irish landowners would not say a word. They would bear the reductions forced upon them as calmly and as nobly as any other landowners; but the complaint the Irish landowners made at this moment was that their rents were reduced, not because it was necessary, but simply at the will and caprice of the Sub-Commissioners. It was somewhat difficult to compare the prices of various products in different parts of the country, but he thought that he could show that agriculture in Ireland, so far from being as depressed as in England, was in a more prosperous condition, and that the prices prevailing at the present moment compared favourably with those of some ten years ago. First of all he would compare the years 1893-95 with the years 1887-89. During the latter period agriculture in Ireland was extremely depressed, and, comparing it with the former period, there had certainly been a decrease in the price of some products, such as wheat, wool, mutton, cattle, and lambs, amounting in the average to about 5 per cent.; but there had been an increase in the price of some of the other products. There had been an increase in oats, barley, hay, potatoes, butter, pork, flax, eggs, and beef. In the case of hay the increase was no less than 40 per cent., and in potatoes 23 per cent. The total average increase was 12 per cent. It was astounding, therefore, to find that in the years 1887-1889, which were acknowledged to be years of depression, an average reduction of only 10 per cent. in rents was recorded, and that in 1893-1895, when there was a decided increase, rents should have been cut down by 27·8 per cent. In view of the enormous reduction of rents by the Sub-Commissioners one would naturally suppose that the value of tenant-right had fallen in Ireland. The contrary, however, was the case. In Ulster, in the period 1882-1895, there were 2,795 cases in which over 17½ years' purchase was given for the tenant-right. On the estates in Down, Antrim and Armagh, which were managed by Mr. Henry Barton, a well-known land agent, the prices given in 1882 in 12 cases averaged 20½ years' purchase; in 1887 the average price given in 42 sales was 24 years' purchase, and in 1896 the average price in 21 sales was 20-30 years' purchase. On Mr. Wolff's estate there was a farm the rental of which was reduced in 1897 from £23 to £12, and in March, 1896, the tenant-right fetched no less than £175. It could not be denied that the tenant-right was now commanding higher prices than it had commanded for many years past. To what was the extraordinary action of the Sub-Commissioners due? It was largely due to the fact that the land legislation gave no definite instructions to the Sub-Commissioners as to the way they were to proceed. ["Hear, hear!"] When he first declared in that House that the Land Bill of 1896 failed absolutely to define the duties of the Sub-Commissioners and was an ill-drafted and ill-considered Measure, he hardly expected that he would be corroborated in so short a time by no less a person than one of the leading Irish Judges, who had been Attorney General for Ireland in 1885 in the Administration then presided over by the present Prime Minister. In the Record Court, Monaghan, recently, Mr. Justice Holmes, giving his decision in an appeal case, said:—

> "The 12th section of the Act has thrown all into confusion. It is a great pity they did not get someone to draft the Land Bill who knew something about the land laws. A more helpless and hopeless production I never saw."

[*Laughter.*] What could be the reasons why the Sub-Commissioners made such extraordinary reductions? Probably one reason was that they desired to make the Land Courts attractive to the tenants, thinking that if they were not made attractive the tenants would keep away from them, with the result that the occupation of the Sub-Commissioners, like Othello's, would be gone. The Commissioners had also probably been influenced by words used by the Chief Secretary for Ireland in the Debates last year. The right hon. Gentleman said on one occasion that rents fixed in earlier years, not were too high, but ought to be reduced if revised. Then on another occasion, in June, the right hon. Gentleman said:—

> "Of course, it was the earnest desire of the tenants that they should be enabled to enter the Courts earlier than in the ordinary course, because it was admitted that if they entered the Courts again their rents would, in all probability, be fixed lower than in the first instance."

The right hon. Gentleman also observed that

> "the hon. Member for East Mayo had quoted from the resolutions of the Presbyterian Assembly the words 'impossible rents' as applied to present rents. These rents doubtless would be 'impossible rents' if they were to be continued indefinitely, but no one entertained that idea, for under an arrangement made by Parliament in 1881 the tenants would be entitled to come into Court in due course for the refixing of their rents."

While he did not for a moment believe that the Chief Secretary wished to bias the minds of the Sub-Commissioners, he could not help thinking that the utterances which he had quoted had influenced the Sub-Commissioners in their recent action. If it was not the right hon. Gentleman's intention that his words should be interpreted by the Sub-Commissioners in the way in which he suggested they had interpreted them, the right hon. Gentleman ought to make the matter clear. The Commissioners had probably also been influenced by the action of the Government in opposing the Amendment moved in their Lordships' House with the object of forcing the Sub-Commissioners to give details and reasons for their reductions. The Sub-Commissioners had not acted in accordance with the spirit of that Amendment, for the reasons given by them were in many cases quite inadequate. In one case where the reduction was 35 per cent. no reason at all was assigned, and in another case where the rent was reduced by more than 50 per cent. the only reason given was that the holding "might receive injury from frost." [*Laughter.*] He wished to know whether the Government thought that the disappearance of the land-owning class would be to the advantage of Ireland. That class would certainly be eliminated if the Sub-Commissioners were allowed to multiply decisions such as those to which he had called attention. The land-owning class said very little, as the noble Marquess had pointed out on a recent occasion, when he remarked that they had not advertised their grievances.

THE PRIME MINISTER: No; I did not say that exactly. What I did say was that they were a class who did not complain, but went to the wall in these days. [*Laughter.*]

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY thought that amounted to much the same thing. The other day, in a speech delivered by Mr. James Wilson, a typical instance was given of the fate of Irish landowners now. He said that 20 years ago an eldest son was left an estate producing £1,000 a year, but there was a mortgage on the estate, and annuities were charged upon it, so that the son's income was brought down to £500. The first time the Commission went round they made a reduction of 20 per cent., which meant a reduction of from £500 to £300 in income; and anyone could imagine the anxiety and terror of the landlord as he looked forward to the next revision, which might leave him almost destitute. Such cases were very numerous, and were especially hard in the case of ladies, owners of small properties, with very limited incomes. Was it for the benefit of Ireland that the landlord class should be eliminated from Ireland? He said, without hesitation, it was not for the benefit of Ireland; but, on the contrary, if landlords were eliminated from Ireland, from that date might be traced the ruin and downfall of Ireland. ["Hear, hear!"] At the present moment there were a certain class—he did not think they were very numerous—who would welcome the expatriation of Irish landlords. Would it be for the benefit of Ireland? Undoubtedly it would not. No doubt their places might be taken by those who had endeavoured to expatriate them, and, in the course of time, those who now occupied the land might be its owners; but we must look a little further ahead, and he asked, would those owners be permitted to retain it? There was a class below the present occupiers, the labouring class, who possessed votes, and their argument would be simple. "You have sunk capital in the land, but we have sunk labour, and we have as much right to obtain a share of the land. We will expatriate you as you expatriated the preceding class. We have votes, and we will return Members to Parliament who will expatriate you, and we shall obtain our share of the land." A pauper proprietary would occupy what is now prosperous agricultural Ireland, a proprietary without capital, absolutely unable to develop the resources of the land, unable to give employment, absolutely unable to borrow money, for he did not suppose for a moment that England would be so utterly foolish as to pledge her credit and advance money to a ruined country for a bankrupt industry. ["Hear, hear!"] History tells us that after a certain period of time property invariably finds its way again into few hands, and it would be so in this case, but not into the hands of owners, who, whatever might be said, were respected by the Irish people, but into the hands of the gombeen men—the men who advanced money at usurious rates of interest. ["Hear, hear!"] What would be the state of Ireland then? Agricultural land gone entirely out of cultivation, for the reasons he had brought forward, and, he would venture to say, it would take a century of hard work and immense sums of money to bring back Ireland to the condition in which it is at the present moment. ["Hear, hear!"] Consequently it was absolutely essential for the interest of Ireland, putting the land-owning interest on one side, to retain a landlord class in the country. All the landlord class asked was that a Commission should be appointed merely to inquire into the facts, whether they are being justly or unjustly treated, whether it is necessary to retain them or to expatriate them. A Royal Commission, difficult though it might be to obtain, would be the means of eliciting the facts; a Committee of the House would be regarded with prejudice by the people of Ireland as representing a House of landlords. But whatever was done should be done quickly. A Commission should inquire into these extraordinary reductions of rent. If these were fair the landlord class would be the last to object, but if they proved, as he ventured to say they would be proved, unfair, then, surely, no lover of justice in the Three Kingdoms would refuse the just rights of even an unfortunate Irish landlord. ["Hear, hear!"] The Prime Minister, at the head of so strong a majority, could do virtually what he liked; and it would be matter of keen regret to those who so loyally supported him, and worked as they did to secure that great majority in 1895, if that great majority should prove to have been bought by the sacrifice of the land-owning interest of Ireland. ["Hear, hear!"]

*VISCOUNT DE VESCI said he was led to interpose in the discussion by the answer given by the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister had alluded to the difficulty of finding an impartial court of inquiry, and said that it was difficult to bring together impartial men on a Royal Commission, but he offered to accept, on a Motion from any one of their Lordships, what, on the whole, would be a more objectionable body for an inquiry—a Committee of the House. As had just been said by the noble Marquess (Lord Londonderry), the confidence of the people would not be attracted to such a body or its Report. In the words of the resolution passed by the Landowners' Conference in Dublin, landlords and tenants are entitled to know the methods and principle adopted by the Land Commission in fixing rents. He fully indorsed that. He did not wish in any way to have the inquiry from the landlords' side only. Tenants were fully entitled to the information how rents were fixed, and landlords how they were to be reduced; but the main point was, and the cause of complaint of the operation of the Land Act was, the method and principle pursued. He desired to cast no slur on the *bonâ fides* and honesty of the Sub-Commissioners, who, no doubt, were exposed to great temptation, from the fact that their appointments were temporary and the applications came mainly from the tenants, and they made their business from them; but what he did believe, and allege, was, that the class of Sub-Commissioners now appointed were not, from their previous careers, capable of fixing the value of land on true principles. The Prime Minister alluded to the difficulty of forming a Commission of impartial men; but there were experts and professional gentlemen fully capable of conducting an inquiry, or, if not, of giving evidence before a Commission, but he would prefer they should be members of the Commission, in order to put test questions as to the method employed in valuing land, and who, from their own experience in valuing land in England and Scotland, knew the true principle on which valuation should proceed. He did not desire to trouble their Lordships at length; he put forward this suggestion in the hope that the Government would consider the propriety of appointing a Commission of experts. He hoped that a motion for a Committee of their Lordships' House would not be made.

*The Earl of ERNE endorsed the appeal for immediate attention being given to this subject, and gave instances which had come within his knowledge illustrating what was now going on in Ireland in relation to land tenure. These instances occurred on an estate which was certainly not rackrented, an estate which, in former days, was held to be a model of what a well, liberally-managed, low-rented estate should be, an estate rented at 14 per cent. below Griffiths' valuation. In 1881 a farm on the estate was rented at £26; the tenant went into the Land Court, and the rent was reduced to £22. At the end of the statutory term a fresh application was made to the Court, and a further reduction was made to £16. On the same estate, and almost at the same time, the tenantright or goodwill of a farm, held under a judicial rent of £17, was put up for auction, and was sold for £380, a fraction under 23 years' purchase, and the occupier now paid £14 or £15 a year, for it was not to be supposed that he borrowed under 4 per cent. for the privilege of holding a farm for which he paid another £17 in rent. In the face of sales of tenantright like this, how could the enormous reductions in rent be justified? There could be no doubt that, under the operation of the Land Act, Ireland was fast becoming more rackrented than in the days before the Land Act passed. Who was benefited by this? Not the landlords, who, in many instances, were saddled with impoverished tenants; certainly not the incoming tenants, who in many cases—perhaps in nine cases out of ten—had to borrow money from the gombeen men at enormous rates of interest; certainly not the community at large, who were interested in land being farmed to the best advantage. The only man who was benefited was the outgoing tenant, who departed for America or the colonies with the money which should be applied to the development of the resources of the land of Ireland. In illustration of the necessity for inquiry, he might mention that there was a widespread feeling in Ireland that in giving these enormous reductions the Commissioners allowed a large sum of money for what was called the "occupation interest." He had looked through all those pink schedules which had been issued and withdrawn, and he found no mention of "occupation interest" in them; nor in filling up the schedules had any of the Sub-Commissioners, he believed, made any allusion to the "occupation interest." But if it was not for that they were given, on what account were these enormous reductions made? Certainly they were not due to any fall in prices, although there might have been a certain fall since the Act was passed. With regard to the form of the inquiry to be held, he agreed with the noble Lord who spoke last that a Committee of their Lordships' House would not be the best form. If it were possible to appoint a small committee of experts, say three or five, taken from the class his noble Friend had indicated, he believed it would be the most satisfactory solution of this question. But, whatever was done, he hoped it would be done at once, because this was a matter which brooked of no delay. Precedents were being established which would have a disastrous effect on the whole of the landed property throughout Ireland, and, if they were to save the landlords from the ruin that was impending, whatever they did must be done quickly.

EARL SPENCER: I do not propose to enter into a defence of the Land Act of 1881 or of the Land Act which was passed last year by Her Majesty's Government, but I should like to make one or two observations with regard to statements made by various speakers. The noble Marquess opposite has spoken of what he appears to fear to be the approaching ruin of Irish landlords. I agree with much the noble Marquess has said as to the influence which one class in Ireland has on another, just as one class in England has on other classes who live on the land. But when we hear of the approaching ruin by the reductions of rent of the landlords in Ireland, I would venture to point out that exactly the same thing might be said of the landlords of this country. ["Hear, hear!"] This comes home to me with great force as an English proprietor of land of some extent, and though I cannot go into the deductions that have been made in Ireland, I know that in this country the deductions since 1879 far exceed, on the great bulk of estates, the deductions quoted by the noble Marquess. The deductions are enormous. I know estates where certainly the net rental has diminished over 60 per cent. I know others where a large diminution in the net rental has taken place. That is, larger than any deductions that have been quoted from Ireland. I am not for a moment going to say that the position is exactly the same, but at the same time, if you are talking of the coming ruin of landlords in Ireland on account of the heavy reductions of rent, I am afraid the same argument will apply with equal force to the landlords in England. We hear a great deal of prairie rental in Ireland. I will venture to say that on estate after estate in England the present rent which the landlord receives is only an interest, and a low interest, on the improvements which he and his immediate predecessors have made on the estate, and that he practically gets no rent from the land at all. I do not wish to pursue this subject, but I only thought it was right to give a note of warning. I do not wish to do it with any disrespect to the Irish landlords. I fully admit, and I always have admitted, that there are many Irish landlords who have done their duty to their tenantry as well as any English or Scotch landlords—["hear, hear!"]—but I thought it as well to point this out, otherwise a very false impression might arise. The noble Duke opposite made some very strong remarks indeed with regard to the Land Commissioners in Ireland. He talked of them as "falsely called Judges," and, though I could hardly believe my ears, I rather thought he called their action arbitrary and licentious. ["Hear, hear!"] I should have liked to ask the noble Duke, who I am sorry to see is not now in his place, to point out where the license in their action has been, and I should like to know who these Commissioners are. The noble Duke did do honour to the three first of these Commissioners. They were submitted to Parliament, and he apparently approved of them. I happened to know them very well when I was in Ireland from 1882 to 1885, but he said that the appointment of their successors had been a series of—I think he used the expression—political jobs from beginning to end. I should like to know who has appointed the present Commissioners. Two out of the three who were new to him had been appointed by the Government presided over by the noble Marquess. ["Hear, hear!"] I think it is only fair to the Land Commissioners to answer those statements of the noble Duke. With regard to the question on the Paper, I should like to say that the noble Duke with great diplomacy alluded only to the Land Act of 1881, and not to the most recent Land Act. No doubt he avoids some pitfalls in asking his question by putting it in that form, but I would venture to lay this down, that it is impossible at this time of day to discuss the principles or the administration of the Act of 1881 without discussing the principles and the administration of the Act of last Session. I rejoice to hear that the noble Marquess does not intend to appoint a Commission at present, and he gave some very weighty reasons for it. My friends on the Bench where I sit would certainly oppose with all the strength we have—we have very little power, I confess—in this House the appointment of a Commission or of a Committee, especially of this House, to inquire into the administration of the Land Acts. It seems to me that you are doing what children sometimes do—pulling up a plant to see how it is going on. That process kills the plant, and I hope the noble Marquess will not attempt to follow that example in this case. I will venture to say our great object should be to strengthen and make as impartial as possible this tribunal, which is, after all, a judicial body. I venture to think that by having these inquiries time after time, and immediately after an Act is passed, you throw a considerable odium on the Commissioners, and you destroy their impartiality and their position. You must remember this—that if one side attacks these Judges the other side will do the same, and they will be put in an exceedingly invidious position, derogatory, I think, to their judgments and to the position which they ought to hold as Land Commissioners in Ireland.

VISCOUNT TEMPLETOWN said he had not intended taking any part in the Debate until he had his attention drawn to the remark of the noble Earl Spencer, in which he compared the condition of English landlords with that of Irish landlords. He well remembered that when he asked a question in their Lordships' House on, he thought, the 17th of last July, he pointed out the substantial difference between the case of the English and of the Irish landlords. In Ireland the reductions were made on grass land as well as on other lands, while in England, if he understood the case correctly, the great reductions were made, broadly speaking, on wheat land and not on grass land; and on that occasion he did not remember that there was any dispute as to the facts and figures which he laid before their Lordships. It seemed to him a most extraordinary thing to have the Prime Minister of England, in answer to a request for an inquiry into the working of the Act of 1881, declaring as an excuse for not granting it immediately that there was very great difficulty in finding men who could be trusted to impartially deal with this matter. That was one of the most extraordinary declarations he supposed he should ever hear in that House. He should have thought that there were so many people in England who wanted to do justice, that the difficulty would be to select them. It was here simply a case of the Act of 1881 having gone astray in the working. He did not wish, any more than other noble Lords, to reflect on the honour or ability of the Sub-Commissioners. He dare say they did their duty to the very best of their ability; but he wanted to ask, when they found a concensus of opinion amongst some of the most learned people in Ireland on Irish land matters, that there was great difficulty in reading what the law actually was and how it could be carried out, was it wonderful if they found men who were not learned in these matters, who found it really difficult to know how they could keep themselves within the four corners of the Act? He earnestly hoped that if any inquiry were granted it would not be made by a Committee of their Lordships' House, because he felt that the responsibility of the decision should rest on people against whom it could not be said, however wrong it might be to say it, that they were landlords, and, therefore, biassed in their decision.

The EARL of KIMBERLEY said that the noble Viscount seemed to think there had not been large reductions upon grass land in England. Though he did not come from a district where grass land was plentiful, he knew that the reductions of the rents of some of the best grass lands in England had been extremely large.

VISCOUNT TEMPLETOWN: Are those reductions for 15 years?

The EARL of KIMBERLEY said that, speaking as a landlord, he would be extremely glad if he saw any probability of an early change which would be likely to bring back the rents they had received previously. The only other remark he wished to make was as to the observation of the noble Marquess that in many cases the tenants complained of the decisions as well as the landlords. Was that not an argument in favour of the partiality of the Commissioners? There was nothing better known than that, in matters of this kind, when neither party was satisfied, the probability was that the best decision had been arrived at.

THE PRIME MINISTER: Is it not possible that a decision is in one direction in one case and in another direction in another case?

*VISCOUNT CLIFDEN said the case of England was altogether different to that of Ireland. In England, reductions were the visitation of God, and were arrived at by bargain between the landlord and tenant, but in Ireland the reductions were made by a most unprincipled tribunal. He said this wittingly and willingly, he might almost say, on the instructions of the noble Marquess at the head of the Government. [*A laugh.*] The noble Marquess had said they were to speak out. He meant to speak out. [The PRIME MINISTER: "Hear, hear!"] In England if the sun shone and prices improved rents would go up. In Ireland never under the iniquitous Land Commission. A more improper tribunal for the purpose than the Land Commission was never thought of. They would like a commission of experts, but, if that was not obtainable, he hoped the noble Duke would move for a Committee, for that, at all events, would elicit some information.

LORD HERSCHELL said the noble Lord professed to be carrying out the advice given by the noble Marquess. He did not understand that advice to be that the Irish landlords should abuse the land tribunals; but that was what the noble Lord had done in very strong and vigorous language. The noble Marquess suggested that the Irish landlords should make known their wrongs, but wrong was not established by the use of strong language in regard to those who had to administer the law. ["Hear, hear!"]

The DUKE of ABERCORN, in reply, said he thought an Inquiry by Commission, whether Royal or not, would be far preferable to an Inquiry by a Committee of their Lordships' House, and he suggested that the best Commission that could be found would be a Commission of three Irish Judges. What was wanted was an Inquiry that would elicit sound evidence. Get true evidence from the witnesses; and he could not but think that the most powerful Commission would be one such as he suggested.

The EARL of ARRAN said it was very necessary that the Inquiry should take place speedily, for it was not only that rents were being reduced every day, but that tenants, in view of the enormous reductions being made, refused to come to any settlement out of Court. That added greatly to the expense of the litigation which must take place on every estate, and which the landlords of Ireland were badly able to bear.

House Adjourned at Twenty-five Minutes past Six o'Clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'Clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 18th March 1897.

QUESTIONS.

POLICE PROTECTION (COUNTY CAVAN).

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland can he state the reasons which induced the Government to grant police protection to Mr. Maxwell Boyle, J.P., County Cavan?

*THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds, Central): The local police authorities, in the exercise of their discretion, and for reasons which appeared to them to be sufficient, afforded protection by patrol to Mr. Boyle for a brief interval. No directions were given by Government in the matter.

MR. FARRELL asked if the right hon. Gentleman could state the reasons?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR was understood to say that he had already stated the reasons.

PRISON VISITING COMMITTEES (ANNUAL CONFERENCE).

Mr. E. H. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the promise made by the Prison Commissioners in July 1895, that, if he should concur, they would take steps to bring about, if possible, a revival of the old annual conferences of the Visiting Committees of Prisons and of Discharged Prisoners' Aid Societies; whether he has discouraged this project; and what steps, if any, have been taken in the matter; and whether there is a prospect of such a conference being held?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Sir Matthew White Ridley, Lancashire, Blackpool) : The suggestion of the Commissioners to which the hon. Member refers has certainly not been discouraged by me; on the contrary, it is one which I heartily approve. But, as the printed observations of the Commissioners and the recent report of Mr. Merrick, both of which have been laid on the Table of the House, have no doubt made the hon. Member aware, certain important questions have been and are under discussion with regard to the duties of Visiting Committees and the organisation of Prisoners' Aid Societies. When these are settled, the contemplated conferences will, I hope, be held again.

PRISON WARDERS (PUNISHMENT).

Mr. PICKERSGILL : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether in any English prison the practice obtains of punishing warders for offences against discipline by placing them on what is called special probation, namely, requiring them to be on duty seven days a week for three months consecutively, without any time off even on Sundays?

Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY : In the event of serious misconduct, an officer may be placed on special probation for a period varying from one to three months according to the gravity of the offence; and during that period he forfeits all privileges in the way of leave, with the one exception that he is allowed an alternate Sunday off duty.

HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS COMMISSION.

Mr. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, in view of the inconveniences arising out of the existing system under which the publications of the Historical Manuscripts Commission are issued, he will consider what, if any, improvements may be made, and, if necessary, appoint a Departmental Committee to report on the subject?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. R. W. Hanbury, Preston) : I agree with my hon. Friend as to the inconvenience caused by the irregular periods at which these reports are issued and the difficulty of placing the sets in any intelligible order in a library, the appendix to a report being sometimes issued a year or two before the report itself. The cost is at present largely increased by the gratis delivery to the two Houses of these valuable reports, and that expense again is due to the fact that they have to be treated as being technically the reports of a Royal Commission. As, however, that Commission seldom, if ever, meets, and the work is likely to be permanent and is practically in the hands of the Record Office, it is quite possible that it might be to the public advantage to formally recognise these facts and deal with these historical records, whether private or public, upon one system. The suggestion of my hon. Friend as to the appointment of a small departmental committee seems to be a good one.

VOLUNTEER OFFICERS' EXAMINATION.

Mr. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether he can state approximately the number of Volunteer officers who could have entered in 1896 for the examination in tactics, field fortification, military topography, organisation and equipment, and military law, in accordance with paragraph 356 in the Volunteer Regulations, 1896, of which only three officers passed that year; whether, in future, he will give instructions that the Return of Volunteer officers who pass this examination shall each year appear in the Army

Orders; and whether, according to the Regulations referred to, a Volunteer officer who has passed in all the subjects of the examination named in 1896, but has failed in any one of the subjects on a previous occasion, is disqualified from holding the distinction conferred upon him by such merit; and, if so, whether, in view of the desirability of encouraging Volunteer officers to become efficient, he will advise the Amendment of the paragraph in the Regulations which imposes this disability?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): The examination under paragraph 356 is open to all officers of Volunteers. As the names of Army officers who pass are not published in Army Orders, there does not seem to be any sufficient reason for publishing those of Volunteer officers. With regard to the point raised in the last paragraph of the hon. Member's Question, a proposal somewhat to the same effect is now under consideration.

GOVERNMENT PROPERTY (RATING).

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether it is the intention of the Government to concede the principle that all Government property shall for the payment of rates, be placed on the same footing as other property; and, if so, whether they would be willing that the assessment committee of a union should appoint a valuer to meet the Government valuer, and confer together as to a basis of valuation?

MR. HANBURY: The principle which the Treasury valuer has recently been instructed strictly to observe, is to treat Government property for rating purposes on precisely the same basis as private property, with the result of a very large increase in the contributions paid by Government; and he always confers directly with the local assessment committees.

AUGHNACLOY BURGESS LIST.

MR. D. MACALEESE (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland how many voters are on the burgess roll of Aughnacloy; when was this roll last revised, and by whom; how many names then on the roll were disqualified and struck off, and how many claimants were admitted to the municipal franchise; where did the revising officer hold his court, and was any public notice given of the date of its sitting; and when will the next court for the revision of this burgess roll be held?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. ATKINSON, Londonderry, N.): There are 72 names on the list of voters for Aughnacloy. The list was revised on the 24th September last by the town clerk. Nine names were struck off at the revision and twelve claimants admitted. The revision was conducted in the office of the town commissioners. No notice of the date of revision was given, as none is required by statute. The next revision will be held in September 1897.

EDUCATION CODE.

*MR. W. E. T. SHARPE (Kensington, N.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether in view of the fact that, exclusive of the two subjects of mechanics for boys and domestic economy for girls, only eight per cent. (or 11,824) out of the 134,855 children in Board Schools who during the five years 1889-94 commenced the study of the other specific subjects of the Code continued it to the third stage, the Department would be prepared to exclude these latter 13 subjects: algebra, Euclid, mensuration, Latin, French or German, animal physiology, botany, chemistry, agriculture, sound, light and heat, magnetism and electricity, shorthand, etc., from the Free Elementary Day Schools Code?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir JOHN GORST, Cambridge University): No, Sir.

MR. SHARPE: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he would be prepared to reconsider the regulation, Art. 101 b, on page 21 of the New Code, by which the higher grant for discipline and organisation, *i.e.*, for good conduct, good manners and language, cleanliness, and neatness to be withheld in future unless provision is made in the time table for instruction in Swedish or other drill, or in suitable physical exercises?

SIR J. GORST: The Committee of Council do not propose to reconsider this regulation, which has been in the Code since 1895.

BOARD SCHOOLS (LONDON).

*MR. SHARPE: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education with reference to the statements in the Report for 1895 of the Chief Inspector of Schools for the Metropolitan Division, that (page 9) out of 485,060 children in London Board Schools only seven per cent., or 33,172, were above the fifth standard, and that (page 7) out of the total number of children at ten years of age in the London Board Schools only 25 per cent. continue there until 12 years of age, what would be the corresponding figures for England and Wales in 1896 under both those heads?

SIR J. GORST: The Committee of Council have no information as to standards. As regards the question of the age at which children leave school, I am unable to find in the report of the Chief Inspector the statement attributed to him. The latest official records show that, in the whole of England and Wales, about 82 per cent. of the children of ten years of age stay till twelve, and in the London Board Schools about 92 per cent.

FAIR RENT APPLICATIONS (IRELAND).

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether the attention of the Land Commissioners has been directed to the action of Mr. Johnstone, agent for the Countess of Morley, whose tenants in the parish of Killinagh, County Cavan, had made application to have fair rents fixed; (2) whether he is aware that the tenants were compelled to withdraw their applications by pressure for arrears and costs due to the landlord; and that James M'Govern, of Corlispannon, who got a fair rent fixed at £5 5s. per annum, was compelled to forego his rights under the Land Law (Ireland) Act 1881, and accept a lease at £8 15s. instead, by reason of similar pressure; have any of these tenants been given the benefit of the evicted tenants' clauses of the Act of 1896; and (3) whether under that Act the Commissioners will take steps to see that the power of the landlord to enforce payment of impossible arrears is curtailed?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: Four tenants on the estate mentioned have served applications to have fair rents fixed. So far as I am aware these applications have not been withdrawn. As to the case of James M'Govern, his rent was fixed by the county court judge at £5 15s. (not £5 5s.) per annum, but on appeal to the Land Commission was fixed at £8 15s. on the written consent of both parties. It does not appear, therefore, that he was compelled to forego his rights under the Act of 1881 and to accept a lease.

MR. FARRELL asked if the right hon. Gentleman would answer the third paragraph of the Question?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR said he had not any information on the point.

MR. E. CARSON (Dublin University): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that in several cases when the Irish Land Commission have purported to fix fair rents, copies of the schedule required by the Land Act of 1896 have not been supplied or obtainable by the parties until after the time limited for appealing; and whether there is any difficulty in arranging that the details required to be inserted in the schedule should be announced at the same time that the fair rent as fixed is declared?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The Commissioners are not aware that in any cases, as suggested by the Question, copies of the schedules referred to have not been obtainable to enable parties to appeal. To announce in Court details of the schedule, would, in the opinion of the Commissioners, be both impracticable and useless.

MR. CARSON: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the Land Commissioners report that the particulars in the schedule "are procurable" at the same time as the announcement of the fair rent?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I have not been informed of that fact. It may be so, but I am not sure.

MR. CARSON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) if he can now state in how many cases the Irish Land Commission have purported to fix rents without specifying in a schedule the details required by the Land Act of 1896; (2) whether it is the intention of the Land Commission to take any steps to have these omissions rectified; and (3) whether pending such rectifications, any copies of the orders purporting to fix such fair rents will be issued?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The number of cases referred to is 295. The second and third paragraphs refer to matters which may come before the Land Commission in a judicial capacity, and they are precluded from expressing an opinion upon them until they have been submitted to the Commission for determination.

MR. CARSON: Is the result of the answer of the right hon. Gentleman that orders remain in the same condition as they have hitherto been?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: That I presume is one of the points to be determined.

MR. J. C. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Are we to understand, as is assumed in the Question, that the Land Commissioners purport to fix fair rents, or are they supposed to actually fix fair rents?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The rents are actually fixed by the Land Commissioners?

MR. CARSON: Yes, but they purport to be fair rents.

DR. ROBERT AMBROSE (Mayo, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether it is a fact that originating notices for the second statutory term are rejected if the record number of the case, as stated in the order or agreement fixing the fair rent for the first statutory term is not entered on the notice; (2) and where a second tenant not having the record number in his possession applies to the Land Commission for leave, and owing to the Land Commission not having replied the tenant's case has been dismissed by the Sub-Commission Court on the ground of insufficient information to identify his case, what steps can such tenant take to enable him to get his judical rent revised?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The fact is correctly stated in the first paragraph, and the reasons for the rejection were set forth in my reply to the similar Question put to me on the 25th January by the hon. Member for South Down. The second paragraph contemplates a case, which, I am informed, cannot arise, as the Land Commission do not remit such defective applications to Sub-Commissioners for adjudication. Every possible assistance is afforded from the office of the Land Commission to the parties, or their solicitors, to enable them to fill up these applications correctly before they are served.

MR. JOHN DILLON (Mayo, E.): Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether the unfortunate tenant who cannot discover his record number has any remedy?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I presume that there ought to be no difficulty. I am not aware that any case has arisen in which it is impossible to ascertain the record number.

DR. AMBROSE: What remedy is there when a tenant has already written to the Land Commission and has received no reply?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I should think the best remedy is to write again.

MR. JAMES DALY (Monaghan, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he is aware if the Sub-Commissioners who sat at Ballybay over five weeks since have given their decisions in cases heard; and (2) whether he can state when the remaining cases from the estate of R. C. Leslie, entered last October, will be tried, and if they will be tried in Ballybay, and if not, can he state the reason?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The Sub-Commission Court hopes to announce its decisions in a number of the cases referred to in the first paragraph in the course of next week. The same Court will commence the hearing of a list of 68 cases from Carrickmacross Union on the 18th instant, and this list will be followed by one from Castleblayney Union. The latter list will include the cases to which reference is made in the second paragraph, but the date of hearing cannot be fixed at present.

MR. DALY asked if the Sub-Commissioners would sit at Ballybay?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I have no information on that point. If the hon. Member desires information on the subject I will make inquiry. Perhaps he would put down a question.

MR. DALY: I will.

MR. CARSON asked if the decisions were announced in court?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: Perhaps my right hon. Friend will put the question down.

ARMY (SPECIAL CAMPAIGN PENSION).

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the fact that the Special Campaign Pension of 9d. a day for all men who joined the Army before 1860 cannot be obtained by any man absolutely in employment, no matter how old or how broken in health he may be, he will consider the advisability of having the conditions altered so as to save respectable old soldiers from the necessity of becoming destitute in order to become eligible for the pension; and whether he can state how many destitutes have received the pension, and how many applicants have been debarred in consequence of having employment?

MR. BRODRICK: The Special Campaign Pensions, being of a compassionate character, are not given to men who are fully able to maintain themselves; but since August, 1895, necessitous circumstances have been accepted as a qualification instead of destitution. Therefore an old soldier, otherwise eligible, is not debarred from a pension by the mere fact of having employment, if his earnings are insufficient for his maintenance.

QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE (CRIMEAN VETERANS).

CAPTAIN NORTON: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether he can state if it is in contemplation to include a parade of old soldiers in the Diamond Jubilee pageant of 22nd June, seeing that a parade of Crimean veterans took place on the occasion of Her Majesty's Jubilee in 1887, and was much appreciated by the public?

MR. BRODRICK: I can only reply, as on other recent occasions, that the suggestion will be considered.

SIR JOHN LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he will consider the practicability of associating some representatives of men who served in the Navy during the Crimean War with the celebration of the sixtieth year of Her Majesty's reign?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): The general arrangements for the celebration of the sixtieth year of Her Majesty's reign are not in my hands, and I am unable to answer the hon. Member's question beyond saying that if men who served in the Army during the Crimean War should take part, naturally the men from the Navy would also do so. [*Cheers.*]

WHITE ESTATE (CO. CORK).

MR. JAMES GILHOOLY (Cork Co., W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether an absolute order for the sale of the White Estate, in the county of Cork, has been made; and, if so, whether he can state approximately when the sale will take place?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The property referred to cannot be identified upon the information given in the Question. If the hon. Member will mention the name, in full, of the owner, and the locality in which the estate is situated, further inquiry will be made.

TRAWLING IN BANTRY BAY.

MR. GILHOOLY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether an Inquiry has been held relating to trawling in Bantry Bay; and, if so, with what result?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: An Inquiry into the question of trawling in Bantry Bay has been held by the Inspectors of Fisheries, who will give their decision with as little delay as possible.

TELEGRAPH FACILITIES (GOVAN).

MR. J. CALDWELL (Lanark, Mid): On behalf of the hon. Member for Lanark, Govan (Mr. JOHN WILSON), I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, if he has received from the Commissioners of the Burgh of Govan a communication in reference to the want of a telegraph office in Ibrox district; and whether he is aware that the opening up of the New Cessnock Docks in the immediate neighbourhood would be largely benefited by giving effect to the requisition of the authorities?

Mr. HANBURY: There is already a telegraph office at Ibrox. The Postmaster General has received from the Commissioners of Govan a communication relating to Alma Street, and has intimated that a case has not at present been made out for the opening of an office there, the Govan branch office being only about 500 yards distant and the Govan Road office being quite close to the docks on their eastern side.

EMBEZZLEMENT (ALLEGED) KILMARNOCK.

Sir WILLIAM WEDDERBURN (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate (1) with regard to the case of Arthur Sturrock, solicitor and bank agent in Kilmarnock, who absconded in the month of August or September last, after having embezzled upwards of £40,000, whether the fact of the embezzlement was known about a month before he absconded; (2) will he explain why proceedings for his apprehension were not taken at once; (3) whether it is the case that the Crown authorities refused to institute proceedings without a guarantee for their expenses; and (4) what steps the authorities propose to take in the case.

*The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. Graham Murray, Buteshire): I ought to say that I have already been in communication on this subject with my hon. Friend the Member for Kilmarnock Burghs (Colonel Denny). The answer to the first and second parts of the question is that it is not the fact that the embezzlement was known a month, or any time, before Sturrock absconded. He remained in good credit until he absconded on the 23rd October. The answer to the third part is in the negative. To the last part of the question, the answer is that photographs and descriptions of Sturrock have been extensively circulated, but that hitherto no reliable information has been obtained.

ROYAL PATRIOTIC FUND.

Mr. HUDSON KEARLEY (Devonport): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can state the reason why the pension awarded to Mrs. Keogh, of Woolwich (whose husband was killed in the Crimea), 43 years since, has recently been stopped by the Commissioners of the Royal Patriotic Fund?

Mr. BRODRICK: I am informed that Mrs. Keogh, who is the widow of a soldier who died at Varna (he did not reach the Crimea), is now the wife of an army pensioner. On her re-marriage her pension was reduced to 2s. 6d. a week; and, lately, this pension has been stopped in consequence of her continued intemperate habits.

Mr. KEARLEY asked whether pensions of this character were liable to be forfeited through moral indiscretion?

Mr. BRODRICK: These pensions are dealt with by the Commissioners of the Royal Patriotic Fund, and I cannot interfere with their discretion in the matter.

GUARDS' BANDS.

Captain BAGOT (Westmoreland, Kendal): I beg to ask the Under Secretary for War whether the Coldstream and Scots Guards will have their respective bands augmented in proportion to the increase in these regiments, or whether it is intended to reduce the bands of the Grenadiers to the present lower establishments of the other two regiments?

The hon. Member also asked the Under Secretary of State for War whether it is in contemplation to reduce the number of officers in any of the existing battalions of Guards; and, if so, what will be the extent of the reduction; and whether the establishment of officers of the proposed new battalions of Guards will be the same as that of existing battalions?

Mr. BRODRICK: There is no intention to reduce the number of officers in any existing battalion of Guards. The establishment of officers for the two new battalions and for the depôt is under consideration. This and other matters, such as that referred to in the first of the Questions, form the subject of correspondence still in progress between the Adjutant General and the General Officer commanding the brigade of Guards.

RAILWAY TRUCKS (LABELLING).

SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he has approached the various railway companies upon the subject of wagons and trucks being labelled on both sides, and provided with brake levers on each side, as favoured by him in reply to a deputation in November last?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. C. T. RITCHIE, Croydon): Yes, Sir, the Board of Trade attach importance to the labelling of wagons and trucks on both sides, and also to the provision of brake levers. They have directed the attention of railway companies to these subjects in the past, and will do so again as opportunity offers. The companies make little difficulty in putting such labels on their own wagons, but they are not responsible for private owners' wagons. The information in possession of the Board shows that many companies have adopted, and that others are adopting, levers on both sides of their wagons.

LAND VALUATION (IRELAND).

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is prepared to recommend the introduction of a short Act authorising the appointment of a Valuation Commission to re-value the land in Ireland or, in case such a task could not at present be undertaken, will he assent to the introduction of a short Bill fixing the valuation of a tenant's holding at the fair rent fixed thereon by the Irish Land Commission?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: As I stated a day or two ago, the question of a re-valuation of Ireland is, in my judgment, well worthy of consideration. I am not prepared at present, however, to give an undertaking on the subject. The suggestion that a short Bill should be introduced fixing the valuation of a tenant's holding at the fair rent fixed thereon by the Land Commission could not be entertained. It is of the essence of any good valuation for rating purposes that the valuation should be uniform throughout each area of taxation, and this quality would be conspicuously absent if the proposal of the hon. Member were adopted.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY FORCE FUND.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is prepared to grant an Inquiry into the system of management and distribution of the Royal Irish Constabulary Force Fund; whether he is aware of the fears of contributors to this fund that it is at present in an insolvent position; and whether, in the event of being unable to assent to an Inquiry, he will cause Papers to be laid upon the Table of the House showing actuarial vouchers for the present state of the accounts?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I have no evidence before me that any inquiry is called for into the system of management and distribution of the Fund. The Fund was placed in a solvent position by the grant of £150,000 made to it by the Parliamentary Vote of 1891. An actuarial investigation into the position of the Fund, as at the 31st March 1893, showed that it was then in possession of a surplus of assets, and the progress of the receipts and expenditure since that date tends to show, to the satisfaction of the National Debt Commissioners, that it remains in a solvent position.

UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES (GOVERNMENT GRANT).

MR. A. BIRRELL (Fife, W.): On behalf of the hon. Member for Norfolk, N. (Mr. H. COZENS-HARDY), I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the Departmental Committee, appointed last year to visit the colleges sharing in the grant made to universities and colleges in Great Britain, and to investigate the character and quality of university work done, have yet made their report; and whether their report will be laid upon the Table of the House at an early date?

MR. HANBURY: This report has been received. It is intended to appoint a committee, as on former occasions, to allocate the grant to universities colleges, and when the report of that committee and the Treasury minute upon it are presented to the House, the report of the Departmental Committee will be presented at the same time. ["Hear, hear."]

SIR JOHN LENG: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the intended Committee has been appointed to allocate the proposed increased grant to university colleges in Great Britain; can he state who are the members of the Committee; and whether the sums proposed to be allocated to the several colleges will be intimated before the Estimate is submitted in Committee of Supply?

MR. HANBURY: The Committee has not yet been appointed; but their work is not likely to take long, and I see no reason why it should not be completed before the Estimate is taken.

SOUTH AFRICA (IMPORTATION OF WARLIKE STORES).

MR HUBERT DUNCOMBE (Cumberland, Egremont): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been directed to the reports which are being persistently circulated of the importation of large quantities of warlike stores into South Africa from French and German sources. Whether he is aware that the late Mr. Stokes was hanged by an officer of the Congo Free State for a similar offence on a minor scale, and what action, if any, he proposes to take to prevent this serious menace to the maintenance of peace in South Africa?

MR. J. M. PAULTON (Durham, Bishop Auckland): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers, may I ask him whether, even assuming that the statements in the question of the hon. Member are true, he has any power to prevent the circulation of mischievous reports either by persons in South Africa or Members of this House?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): I have no power whatever to prevent the circulation of mischievous reports. I wish I had. [*Laughter.*] I confess I am not quite certain that I understand the Question of my hon. Friend. I presume he refers to the importation of warlike stores into the South African Republic, of which I am fully aware. The late Mr. Stokes was, as I understand, accused of an offence against the laws of the Congo Free State which do not apply to South Africa. I am not aware that there is any breach of local or international law in the importation of warlike stores into the Colonies and States of South Africa.

NATIONAL BOARD (IRELAND).

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether Head Inspector Sullivan, of the National Board, who had been removed from Dublin to Galway, was removed by the Board of Commissioners or by the Resident Commissioner; (2) how long had he been in charge of the Dublin district when he was removed; (3) if it was stated to the Board that he was re-transferred to Galway because his appointment to Dublin would cause friction; (4) did the Board ever inquire who made the allegation, or from what source the friction was likely to arise; and (5) whether any charge was ever made against Mr. Sullivan during his time in the Board's service?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The Board of National Education state that the removal of Mr. Sullivan, Head Inspector, from Dublin to Galway was in pursuance of Order of the Resident Commissioner in the ordinary exercise of his functions. Mr. Sullivan was twenty days in Dublin. The Minute of the Board, dated 17th November, 1896, which is the only official record of the Acts of the Commissioners is as follows:—

> "Ordered that Mr. Sullivan be informed that his letter of the 30th October has been before the Board and has been duly considered, but that the Commissioners see no reason to interfere with the arrangements already made, by which, after he had declined to take charge of the Belfast Circuit, he was reappointed to Galway."

The reply to the last paragraph is in the negative.

MR. T. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour): Arising out of that answer, may I ask whether any answer has been given as to the complaint and friction which arose out of the appointment. Have the National Board declined to answer that?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I have given to the House all the information at my disposal, and I have read the Minute of the Commissioners on the subject. Any private representations that have been made are not within my knowledge.

Mr. HARRINGTON: If we move for the letter of Mr. Sullivan to be laid on the Table as a Return will the right hon. Gentleman agree to give it?

*Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: I cannot answer that without communicating with the Commissioners.

Mr. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): Might I ask why this Gentleman declined to take charge of the Belfast circuit?

*Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: I am not aware.

LADIES' CARRIAGES.

Mr. JAMES BIGWOOD (Middlesex, Brentford): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been drawn to a letter in *The Times*, of the 13th instant, in which it is alleged that an inspector of the South Western Railway Company at Clapham Junction, whilst a train was in motion, forced a man into the compartment of a carriage labelled "Ladies' carriage," in spite of the protests of the sole lady occupant, with the consequence that the lady, in her dread, jumped out of the moving train; and whether he has taken any steps to obtain from the Railway Company explanations of this alleged act on the part of one of their superior servants, especially in the light of a recent notorious occurrence on the same Company's line?

Mr. RITCHIE: Before my hon. Friend's Question appeared on the Paper I had communicated with the Railway Company, and I have received a reply from Sir Charles Scotter to the following effect:—

> "The letter which appeared in *The Times* of the 13th instant is, I much regret to say, substantially correct, and the only explanation which the inspector complained of has to offer for his misconduct is, 'that it was raining very hard at the time, and he did not notice that the compartment referred to was labelled as reserved for ladies.' I send you herewith a specimen of the label pasted on both ends of the carriage. The inspector was, therefore, without any excuse in allowing a male passenger to enter the compartment. When the case was brought under our notice, the inspector was immediately suspended from duty, and the directors are now considering how such a serious breach of the Company's regulations shall be dealt with. I may say that the inspector will not be allowed in any case to resume duty on a passenger platform."

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

General RUSSELL (Cheltenham): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he can give any information as to the decision of the Government relative to the recent raising of the commission on post office orders for all sums of £1 and under to three pence, a charge which presses very heavily on Friendly Societies of working men?

Mr. G. H. MORRELL (Oxon, Woodstock): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he is aware that members of the Hearts of Oak Benefit Society, with headquarters in London, and half of its members resident in the country, using for greater security post office orders rather than postal orders in transmission of quarterly contributions and sick pay, and having by a rule of the Society all incidental expenses deducted out of the moneys due to each member, suffer serious loss in consequence of the new charge (1st February, 1897) of 3d. on all orders, however small, not exceeding £3, instead of the 2d. formerly charged on orders not exceeding 20s.; and whether he will cause inquiry to be made with a view to the consideration of some relief to the Friendly Societies generally in this respect?

*Mr. A. F. GODSON (Kidderminster): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether the Postmaster General has come to any determination on the question of reducing the charges on money orders under £1 to the old amount of 2d., and so meeting the wishes of the members of the Friendly Societies and others?

Mr. HANBURY: It is no doubt the case that, owing to the fact of persons without banking accounts not being able to make use of crossed postal orders, the increased cost of money orders, which are regarded as safer than uncrossed postal orders for the transmission of small amounts, has caused inconvenience. The Government has decided to revert to the old rate of 2d. on money orders not exceeding £1, and this will be done without any condition as to the abolition of the advice note or otherwise.

MR. W. J. GALLOWAY (Manchester, S.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether, under Subsection (2) of Section 30 of the Friendly Societies Act, it is compulsory to notify members by written or printed notice sent by post or delivered at the last known address of members before non-forfeiture of their interests therein, and whether such notices are allowed to be sent through the post under the cover of a halfpenny stamp or wrapper; and whether, in the case of such notices not being delivered, they have from 1876 until recently been returned to the sender through the Dead Letter Department free of charge; why the charge of a halfpenny is now demanded for the return of such notices sent under the abovementioned section; and whether the Postmaster General will resort to the old practice, and not charge for the return of such notices?

MR. HANBURY: The Friendly Societies Act referred to seems to have been repealed, but the Collecting Societies and Industrial Assurance Companies Act, 1896, provides for the issue of notices such as the hon. Member describes. These notices are allowed to be sent by the halfpenny post. Prior to the 1st January, 1895, any which could not be delivered were returned to the senders free of charge, but since that date all undeliverable packets prepaid halfpenny only have been liable to a return postage of one halfpenny, and the Postmaster General regrets that he cannot see his way to make an exception in favour of Friendly Societies. It may be added that on the 1st January, 1895, the charge for redirection previously made on all halfpenny postal matter was abolished, and in connection with this change it was considered necessary to revise the practice in regard to the free return of such packets when undeliverable.

MR. GALLOWAY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the Department have yet come to any decision with regard to the proposed alteration in the manner of making the statutory declaration now necessary in the case of a lodge of any Friendly Society desiring an alteration or amendment of their rules?

MR. HANBURY: An additional Treasury Regulation is in preparation and will, I hope, shortly be issued, by which, as an alternative to the statutory declaration, a document will be provided giving formal information as to the amendments made in the society's rules, to be signed by two officers of the society. This it is hoped will meet the wishes of the Friendly Societies and remove the inconvenience that has been complained of.

ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE, SANDHURST.

GENERAL RUSSELL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the recommendation contained in the Report of the Visitors of the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, that a swimming bath should be provided for the cadets; and whether provision for this will be made in next year's Estimates?

MR. BRODRICK: The question of providing a swimming bath at the Royal Military College will be considered when the Estimates for 1898–9 come under discussion.

NATIONAL SCHOOL TEACHERS (IRELAND).

MR. HARRINGTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether an assistant teacher, serving five years in a workhouse National School and getting his second-class certificate, is entitled to the same rights as to bonus on getting appointed to an ordinary National School as if his whole service as assistant had been in the latter school?

*__MR. GERALD BALFOUR__: The service rendered as assistant teacher in a workhouse National School, if rendered under the provisions of the rules as to average daily attendance and classification that warrant the recognition of assistant teachers in ordinary National Schools, would entitle the assistant to the same rights as to bonus under the Irish Education Act, 1892, on being appointed to an ordinary National School, as if his whole service as assistant had been in the latter school.

INTERMEDIATE EXAMINATIONS (IRELAND).

MR. M. J. FLAVIN (Kerry, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will grant the Return asked for in connection with the Intermediate Examinations (Ireland) 1896?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I am informed by the Commissioners of Intermediate Education that they will furnish the hon. Member with a Return containing the information indicated, so far as they are in a position to provide such information, on his making application to the office of the Commissioners in Dublin. Under these circumstances it is not considered necessary to grant the Return as a Parliamentary Paper.

MR. FLAVIN: Would the right hon. Gentleman not lay the Return on the Table of the House for general information?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I don't see that there is sufficient ground for going to that expense. The hon. Member, as I have said, can have the Return by applying for it to the Commissioners.

BEHAR OPIUM AGENCY.

MR. ARTHUR PEASE (Darlington): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether the Government has any information as to the progress made by the Government of India in arranging that the Behar Opium Agency should deal directly with the cultivators of opium instead of dealing through middlemen?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): The subject to which the hon. Member refers has not been lost sight of by the Government of India, but I have received no information about it beyond what is contained in the Annual Report on the Administration of the Opium Department for 1895-6. I shall be glad to place a copy of this Report at the disposal of the hon. Member for perusal if he wishes it.

POST OFFICE (CLONMEL).

MR. T. J. CONDON (Tipperary, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether it is in the contemplation of the Government to substitute or build a new post office in Clonmel in lieu of the present building, and whether a site has been selected by the surveyors of the Department situate at the extreme end of the lower portion of the town, and opposite the gates of the military barracks; whether he is aware that such site is objected to by the inhabitants of the town as being unsuitable and inconvenient, especially to ladies; whether the wishes of the townspeople or of the Corporation were in any way consulted as to the choice of a site; whether any advertisement was issued applying for a site; and, if not, what steps did the surveyors take to ascertain whether more suitable sites could be obtained from persons other than the owners of unoccupied premises?

MR. HANBURY: It is in contemplation to provide a new post office at Clonmel, but no premises or site have as yet been selected. Several sites are under consideration, and before a definite choice is made the views of the local authorities on the subject will, as usual, be ascertained.

IRISH MAIL SERVICE.

MR. G. MURNAGHAN (Tyrone Mid): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he is aware that the delay in the delivery of the mails in several towns in the North of Ireland causes very serious inconvenience and considerable loss to the inhabitants of these towns; whether he is aware that the forenoon delivery which leaves the Belfast post office at 10.20 a.m. only reaches the office of the *Irish News*, a distance of less than half a mile, at 12.15 p.m., a delay of almost two hours; and if, when making arrangements to accelerate the carriage of mails to and from Ireland, he will also provide for their speedy delivery?

MR. HANBURY: The Postmaster General is not aware that there is delay in the delivery of the mails in several towns in the North of Ireland, causing serious inconvenience to the public, but he has ordered an inquiry into the matter. As regards Belfast, it is true that the forenoon delivery at the office of the *Irish News* has lately been made after the proper time, and this appears to have arisen from the temporary employment as substitute for the regular postman of a man less acquainted with the route. Arrangements will at once be made for restoring punctuality.

MR. FLAVIN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, if any communications have been addressed by the Post Office authorities to the Irish Railway Companies in reference to the acceleration of the mail service; if so, to what companies; and whether he can state when the proposed new mail arrangements will be effected?

MR. HANBURY: The Secretary of the Post Office in Dublin has been instructed to enter into communication on the subject in question with the Irish Railway Companies owning the lines from Dublin to Belfast and Derry, Galway, Cork, and Wexford, and to make arrangements for carrying out the necessary alterations on those lines on the 1st of May; and he is now engaged in this matter. Most of the towns on the Waterford and Limerick Railway will also be provided for by the same date; but it will not be possible to extend the arrangements to the remoter districts of Ireland until after the alterations on the main lines have been carried out.

MR. FLAVIN: Have these instructions been sent to the Railway Company?

MR. HANBURY: Yes; they were sent some days ago.

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork E.): Can the right hon. Gentleman say what additional interval will be gained under the new arrangement?

MR. HANBURY: I think the mails to Cork will arrive 40 minutes earlier and leave 50 minutes later.

CONGESTED AREAS (IRELAND).

MR. JOHN ROCHE (Galway E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will state if the Poor Law divisions of Woodford, Derrylaur and Loughatorick, in the Loughrea Union, and the division of Coose, in the Portumna Union, are scheduled under the Congested Districts Board; and, if so, how long, and what actual benefit they have derived under same?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The electoral divisions named in the Question are scheduled as congested areas. The cattle-breeding improvement scheme has been extended to one of these divisions, and the Board have also offered a grant of £500 towards the construction of a road from Woodford to Derrygoolin, provided the Grand Jury would contribute the balance of the sum required for its completion. So far, however, it does not appear that the Grand Jury have accepted the Board's offer, and if there be a generally-expressed wish that the sum of £500 should be otherwise expended in the locality, the Board will be prepared to consider any suggestions that may be made to them.

WATER SUPPLY (PUNJAB).

SIR HERBERT MAXWELL (Wigton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether the attention of his Department has been called to the sufferings of the Black Watch at Sabathu, in the Punjab, from the deficient and contaminated water supply, and consequent prevalence of enteric fever; whether any steps are being taken to improve the water supply at that station and Dagshai; and whether Kasauli, Solon and Jutogh, where the water supply has been improved, are now completely free from enteric fever?

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: It appears from the monthly returns, which have been received up to November last, that enteric fever prevailed in the regiment of the Black Watch at Sabathu, in the Punjab, during April, May and June, increased in July, August and September, but diminished greatly in October, while no cases were reported in November. The report as to the health of British troops for the year 1896 has not yet reached me; but I will ask the Government of India to expedite it, and also to furnish information as to the water supply at Sabathu, Dagshai, Kasauli, Solon and Jutogh.

EXPORTS OF COAL, CINDERS AND PATENT FUEL.

MR. A. J. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury why the Customs Return of Coal, Cinders and Patent Fuel shipped from the several ports of England, Scotland and Ireland for the year 1895, was only issued on 20th February 1897; when the Return for 1896 may be expected, and if anything can be done to secure the publication of these Returns early in the year following the year of export?

MR. HANBURY: A Return is issued by the Board of Trade early in January each year, giving the exports of coal, coke, cinders and fuel for the preceding calendar year (page 54 of Board of Trade Returns). These figures are obtained from the Customs, and so far as the exports are concerned there would be no reason for not furnishing this information in the Return mentioned by the right hon. Member during the month of January, though it gives the facts in much greater detail, both as to the countries to which the exports go and the ports of the United Kingdom from which they are exported. But the Return also gives the coastwise traffic, which the Board of Trade Return does not give, and this would take at least a fortnight to prepare, as the Customs have to obtain the information specially from all the ports of the Kingdom. The fact is, however, that this is not an annual Government Return, but is moved for by a private Member, and last year it was not moved for at all. This year the Returns for both 1895 and 1896 were ordered by the House of Commons on 4th February, 1897, and no urgency was intimated.

COALING STATION (LOUGH SWILLY).

MR. THOMAS B. CURRAN (Donegal, N.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether it is the intention of the Admiralty to establish a coaling station and a torpedo depôt in Lough Swilly, county Donegal; at which side east or west of the Lough it is proposed to establish the coaling station and torpedo depôt; and what are the intentions of the Government in regard to the forts on the west side of Lough Swilly, and are they to be repaired or utilised for Naval purposes?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): There is no present intention of establishing a depôt at Lough Swilly such as suggested in the hon. Member's Question. It is not desirable that I should enter into details with regard to any defence works which may be contemplated.

BRITISH TROOPS IN INDIA (HEALTH).

CAPTAIN NORTON: On behalf of the hon. Member for North Aberdeen (Captain PIRIE), I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he is now able to state the approximate date when the Report of the Departmental Committee on the Health of the Army in India will be placed in the hands of Members; and if he can state the reasons for the delay in its publication?

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: I am laying the Report on the Table today, and hope that it will be distributed to-morrow.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, on the Report of the Departmental Committee on the Health of the British troops in India, the Government will give facilities for its discussion?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): In answer to my right. hon. Friend, I have to ask him if he will defer his Question until he has had an opportunity of reading the Blue Book, which will be in his hands in a few days.

HULME CAVALRY BARRACKS (MANCHESTER).

MR. GALLOWAY: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether the authorities have come to any decision with regard to the occupation of the Hulme Cavalry Barracks; and, if not, whether there is any likelihood of a decision being arrived at in the immediate future?

*MR. BRODRICK: As there are no facilities at Manchester for the training of a cavalry regiment, it is not proposed to re-occupy Hulme Barracks with cavalry; but they are used at present for infantry purposes.

NORWOOD-UNDER-SOUTHALL (POSTAL DISTRICT).

MR. BIGWOOD: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, why it is that a regular postman is not appointed for the

Norwood-under-Southall district; and whether he is aware that the district has been left to casual service only for now nearly six months past?

MR. HANBURY: The case to which the hon. Member refers has been delayed in consequence of a revision of the post having been found necessary. The work had grown too heavy for one man, and other arrangements had to be made. A postman is, however, now under nomination for the establishment, and, if he succeeds in obtaining the necessary Civil Service certificate, he will be appointed without further delay.

METROPOLITAN POLICE (HACKNEY CARRIAGE DEPARTMENT).

CAPTAIN NORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that for some months past persons representing railway companies, and other persons, are daily touting for cab-drivers for a particular cab company or companies in the offices or building of the Chief Commissioner of Police at the new Police Offices, New Scotland Yard, and if so, will he explain on what grounds this special favour is granted to some persons, whilst refused to others equally interested in the cab trade; and will he consider the advisability of putting a stop to the practice in question?

SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: So far as I am aware, there is no such practice.

POOR LAW AND MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE (IRELAND).

MR. HARRINGTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he has received from the Dublin Trades Council, representing a membership of 15,000, a resolution requesting the Government to take immediate steps to assimilate the different Poor Law and Municipal franchises in Ireland to the Parliamentary franchise; and (2) whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce legislation on the subject at an early date?

***MR. GERALD BALFOUR**: The reply to the first paragraph is in the affirmative. As I have already intimated, it is not in contemplation to introduce legislation this Session dealing with the Municipal and Poor Law franchise.

QUEEN'S YACHT "VICTORIA AND ALBERT."

SIR EDWARD GOURLEY (Sunderland): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if he will inform the House the original cost of Her Majesty's yacht *Victoria and Albert*, and the amount of money since expended annually upon refits, decorations, and repairs, and also upon the reconstruction of the hull and machinery; and will he also state to what use the *Victoria and Albert* is to be relegated when the proposed new yacht is ready for sea?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: The hon. Member has already the information he asks for prior to 1883, when he obtained a return of expenditure upon Her Majesty s yachts. Since 1883 the average annual expenditure has been £8,847. It is not possible at short notice to distinguish between the various items of expenditure, as requested by the hon. Member, nor could there be any object in doing so. The use to which the *Victoria and Albert* may be put, when relieved by the new yacht, will depend upon the result of the thorough survey of the hull and machinery, which will then be made.

TRUCK ACT.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley): On behalf of the hon. Member for Cambridge, Wisbech (Mr. C. T. GILES), I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Truck Act 1896 has any application to contracts of employment made before the Act came into operation; and whether the scale of deductions and fines under such contracts can still be enforced?

***SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY**: The Act makes it illegal to impose any fine or make any deduction, after the date of its coming into operation, except in pursuance of or in accordance with such a contract as is required by the Act. If, therefore, a contract made before that date is not such a contract as is required by the Act, no fines or deductions can be imposed under it; and though not itself made illegal, it becomes inoperative so far as fines or deductions are concerned.

RICHMOND LUNATIC ASYLUM (DUBLIN).

MR. J. L. CAREW (Dublin, College Green): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the present alarming condition of the Richmond Lunatic Asylum in Dublin; whether he is aware that, with accommodation available for only 1,000 patients, 1,714 were housed there in October last; and that, in consequence of this overcrowding, beri-beri, a loathsome disease hitherto confined to the densely and filthy quarters of Chinese and other Eastern cities, has appeared, and of 113 patients attacked last year, seven died up to December last; will he explain why, notwithstanding the repeated protests of two of the members of the Board of Control against overcrowding, no practical steps have been taken by that body to stamp out the disease; and whether, in the circumstances, the Government will see that immediate precautions are taken to prevent its spreading.

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The Irish Government has been giving close and constant attention to the accommodation at the Richmond District Asylum and the outbreak of the beri-beri there. The number of patients on the asylum register at the end of 1896 was 1,728, of whom, 29 were at Portrane. The present accommodation of the Richmond Asylum is for 1,398 patients, in addition to which provision has been made for 80 patients at Portrane, and for 40 in the residence of the resident medical superintendent (surrendered for that purpose), thus bringing up the present accommodation to 1,518. Further temporary accommodation for 220 patients is now being provided at Portrane. The number of deaths at Richmond from beri-beri during 1896 was eight, as against 123 deaths from various other causes. I may observe that the general death rates in this asylum for 1895 and 1896 were the lowest recorded since the opening of the asylum. In 1895 the percentage of deaths from all causes was only 7·1, and in 1896, 7·8, and, comparing these rates with the death rates in the principal English asylums during 1896, I find that with two exceptions the rates in the English asylums were much higher than at Richmond. Every effort has been and is being made by the Board of Control to stamp out the disease known as beri-beri, and to provide adequate accommodation for the patients.

MR. CARSON: Is it proposed to make any permanent enlargement of the asylum? The right hon. Gentleman spoke of a "temporary arrangement."

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I understand that a private Bill is in course of preparation or of being passed through the House for the purpose.

REFORMS FOR TURKEY.

*MR. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk Eye): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is able to make any statement with respect to the probable date when the scheme of reforms agreed to by the representatives of the Six Great Powers will be presented to the Sultan?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. G. CURZON, Lancashire, Southport): I am afraid that I cannot, at present, make any statement as to the probable date when the scheme of reforms will be presented to the Sultan.

*MR. STEVENSON: Has that scheme of reforms been agreed to now by the six Governments as well as by the six representatives?

MR. CURZON: No, Sir, it is still under discussion.

CRETE.

MR. DILLON: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether looting goes on daily unchecked in Canea; whether the Turkish police in the town are intrusted with any police duties; and, whether the only police force in the town is the force which recently mutinied and murdered its commanding officer?

MR. CURZON: On the 6th inst. her Majesty's Consul telegraphed that pillage was taking place in Canea. The Turkish police continue to discharge police duties there. It is not correct to say that this force recently mutinied. The mutiny was confined, as I have twice previously stated in the House, to 40 Albanian gendarmes.

Mr. DILLON: Has anything been done to stop the pillage?

Mr. CURZON: Oh, yes, Sir, of course it has, because, as I have often had to state in this House, peace and order in the town are looked after by the detachments from the ships of the Powers.

*Mr. T. C. H. HEDDERWICK (Wick Burghs): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State of State for War whether the Government are dispatching any Highland regiments to Crete; and, if so, whether such troops have been selected with a view to the possibility of hill fighting?

Mr. BRODRICK: Six hundred men of the Seaforth Highlanders are under orders for Crete, having been selected by the Commander-in-Chief as being in all respects admirably fitted for the service.

*Mr. HEDDERWICK: Arising out of that I should like to ask whether this country is supposed to be at war with any Power in Crete? [*Ministerial Cries of* "Order."]

An hon. Member asked what was the peculiarity of the service referred to?

Mr. BRODRICK: I do not know that it is in any respect peculiar.

Mr. WILLIAM ALLAN (Gateshead): Will the right hon. Gentleman reconsider his decision to send Highlanders out to Crete and send some other regiment? [*Laughter.*]

[No answer was given.]

*Sir CHARLES DILKE: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether any declaration of blockade has been issued and notified in connection with the present proceedings of the Great Powers; and whether Her Majesty's Government have consented, while the German Government have declined, to employ land forces for operations in the interior of the Island of Crete?

Mr. JOHN MORLEY (Montrose Burghs): Before the First Lord of the Treasury answers this, perhaps it would be convenient, in regard to the first half of the question, to answer a question of mine, of which I have given him private notice, at the same time—whether he can inform the House, in view of the statement of M. Méline in the French Chamber on Monday last (and Parliament has been referred to that speech by the British Prime Minister)—(*Cheers*)—that "Greece would once again be invited to accede to the Note of the Powers," and further "Crete would be blockaded and the contingent of European troops increased," whether—this is the question—Greece was in fact, according to M. Méline's words, "invited to accede to the Note of the Powers" before the blockade was instituted?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: I believe information has been sent to the British Minister at Athens for notification to the Greek Government of the blockade which will be established in connection with Crete. In regard to the Question on the Paper, I think the first paragraph is answered by what I have just said. In regard to the second paragraph ——

*Sir C. DILKE: I may say I used the legal words of international law, "issued and notified." The words have a technical meaning.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: I fancy that is in process of being done. With regard to the second paragraph of the Question, it is not accurate—as far as I know—to say that the German Government have declined to send any troops to the island. They thoroughly agree with the general policy of the Powers.

*Sir C. DILKE: But are they sending any troops?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: I do not know.

Mr. MORLEY: Will technical notification be made to the Greek Government as to what M. Méline meant when he said "Greece would once again be invited to accede to the Note of the Powers"?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: I really do not know. ["Hear, hear!"] I have not much satisfaction in answering the questions of the right hon. Gentleman on behalf of an Opposition who try to embarrass the Government as much as they can—[*cheers, and Opposition cries of* "Oh!"]—by their speeches out of doors, though they dare not move a Vote of Censure. [*Loud and prolonged Ministerial cheers.*]

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT (Monmouthshire, W.), who was received with Opposition cheers, said: Before we move a Vote of Censure—[*Ministerial laughter*]—we must ask whether we shall be allowed to debate it in this House. [*Ministerial cries of* "Oh!" *and Opposition cheers.*] I must again ask, as we have been referred to the speech of M. Méline, for an answer as to that speech. It is the only information which has been given to this House or to the country—[*Ministerial cries of* "Order!"]—and I ask again whether, M. Méline, having stated that Greece would again be invited to accede to the Note of the Powers, and that Crete would not be blockaded, and the contingent of European troops increased until that invitation had been given—

MR. CURZON: He did not say that. [*Opposition cries of* "Order!" *and Ministerial laughter.*]

SIR W. HARCOURT: You are laughing too soon. Greece, he says, will once again be invited to accede to the Note of the Powers, then Crete will be blockaded and the contingent of troops disembarked there will be increased. What does the word "then" mean? Does it mean before or after? [*Ministerial cries of* "Order!"] I have a right to ask that question because this is the explanation of the English Government— [*Opposition cheers.*]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I do not, as I have already said, feel myself bound to explain M. Méline's speech. [*Opposition laughter and Ministerial cheers.*] I understand the right hon. Gentleman to refer to a speech made by the Prime Minister in another place. The right hon. Gentleman has colleagues in another place; let them ask the Prime Minister. [*Ministerial cheers and Opposition laughter.*] With regard to the observation that fell from the right hon. Gentleman before that, I do not know whether he means to suggest that we desire to prevent him moving a Vote of Censure in this House. I can assure him he is greatly mistaken, and he has only got to name his day. [*Loud and prolonged Ministerial cheers, and cries of* "Name it."]

QUEEN'S JUBILEE PROCESSION (MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT).

MR. KEARLEY: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether the Jubilee Procession of Her Majesty the Queen will pass the Houses of Parliament; if so, whether it is the intention of his Department to make suitable arrangements for Members to view it?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. AKERS-DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's): Suitable arrangements will be made for Members to view Her Majesty's Procession on the day of the celebration in June; but it is not yet in my power to state what they will be.

TORPEDO BOATS (ROYAL NAVY).

MR. WILLIAM ALLAN (Gateshead): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what is the total number of torpedo boats having a speed of from 15 to 25 knots in Her Majesty's Navy; where are they lying; and what is the number in each of the respective dockyard basins or creeks?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. W. E. MACARTNEY, Antrim, N.): There are 98 first-class torpedo boats distributed between the home and foreign stations. Fifty of these are abroad, 24 are at Portsmouth, 14 at Devonport, and 10 at Chatham.

MUSSEL BEDS.

MR. C. L. ORR-EWING (Ayr Burghs): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the list of mussel beds referred to in Section 11 of the Sea Fisheries Regulation Act 1895 has been prepared, and if it will be presented to Parliament?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE: Yes, the list referred to by the hon. Member has been prepared, and it will be presented to Parliament so soon as it can be printed.

BETTING ON RACECOURSES.

MR. PICKERSGILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that, at the Derby Hunt Steeplechases held at Derby on Tuesday last, betting was carried on in Tattersall's Ring by bookmakers in the manner recently decided by the Queen's Bench Division to be unlawful, and that, although the police were present in force, they did not interfere; and whether, in virtue of the powers conferred upon him by No. 1 of the Regulations made under the authority of the Prosecution of Offences Acts, 1879 and 1884, he will order the Director of Public Prosecutions to institute criminal proceedings where evidence is available in cases in which the law appears to have been broken?

The hon. Member further asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, with a view to secure uniformity throughout the country in the due execution of the law, the Director of Public Prosecutions will, by a requisition in virtue of the Regulations under the Prosecution of Offences Acts, 1879 and 1884, require the chief officer of every police district to furnish him with such information as the Regulations prescribe respecting the offence of unlawful betting on racecourses and similar places within his district?

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet) asked whether the Home Secretary was aware that further legal proceedings were pending arising out of the decision in the Queen's Bench Division referred to?

*Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: I am not aware whether further proceedings are possible with the exception of those involved by the remission of this case to the magistrates. I will answer both Questions of the hon. Member for Bethnal Green at the same time. My attention has not been called to the case he mentions, and the decision of the High Court is of so recent a date and involves so many questions requiring serious consideration that it is quite impossible for me to give him a complete answer at present. Perhaps the hon. Member will be good enough to postpone his question for a few days.

PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS (SCOTLAND).

Mr. R. SOUTTAR (Dumfriesshire): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate (1) whether his attention has been called to the continued and widespread dissatisfaction existing in Scotland in connection with the method of auditing Parish Council accounts; and (2) whether he can hold out any hope that the system will be changed?

*The LORD ADVOCATE: The answer to the first paragraph of the hon. Member's Question is in the affirmative. The representations made are being carefully considered. A number of appeals against the charges made by the auditors have been received and are being dealt with. Until this procedure has been completed it is impossible to decide what change, if any, should be made. I may add that, as the hon. Member is aware, no important change in the system can be effected without legislation.

TELEPHONE EXCHANGES.

Mr. A. D. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether the Post Office officials will make any separate Return, actual or approximate, of the enormous sums, amounting to hundreds of thousands of pounds, which they have expended in the construction and maintenance of telephone exchanges, and of the amounts earned by the exchanges?

Mr. HANBURY: The sum expended upon the construction of telephone exchanges is £107,000, of which about three-fourths has been spent on the exchange at Newcastle, and a large portion of the remainder in Cardiff and the neighbourhood. It is not possible to give either the amounts earned by the telephone exchanges in the hands of the Government or the amounts spent on their maintenance. The telephones and the telegraphs have the same headquarters charges, and the same offices, the same clerks, the same mechanics, the same engineering staff. And even if the accounts of the telephones could be separated, it would not be desirable to furnish information as to the details of our working to the National Telephone Company, who are in competition with the Post Office in the very district concerned.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS BILL.

Mr. H. HOBHOUSE (Somerset, E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if it will be possible for a scheme of allotment, made under Sub-section (3), Clause 1, of the Voluntary Schools Bill, to include (in addition to grants to individual schools) provisions for the expenditure of part of the share allotted to the association upon central classes for pupil teachers or scholars, or upon visiting teachers and apparatus for the common use and benefit of the schools included in the association?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: I understand that it would be contrary to the views of the Department that money should be given, except to individual schools. There is no reason why the money so given should not be devoted to the purposes suggested by my hon. Friend's Question.

ENGINEERING TRADE DISPUTE.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether any steps have been taken by the Board to bring about a settlement of the dispute in the Engineering Trade; and, if not, whether he will endeavour to induce both parties to refer the dispute to arbitration before engaging in a protracted and wasteful struggle?

MR. RITCHIE: No application has been made to the Board of Trade in this matter. I understand that the parties to the dispute have been in direct communication with each other. It does not seem to me that the Board can at present usefully intervene.

FINANCIAL RELATIONS COMMISSION (GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND).

MR. DILLON: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he can fix Monday 29th March for the Debate on the Report of the Royal Commission on the financial relations between Great Britain and Ireland?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Subject to this hypothetical Vote of Censure, I think it will be probably convenient to discuss the financial relations on the day named by the hon. Gentleman—namely, on Monday week.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS' BILL.

Considered in Committee.

[The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS, Mr. J. W. LOWTHER, in the Chair.]

[PROGRESS, 17TH MARCH.—TWELFTH DAY.]

Clause 2,—

REPEAL OF 17S. 6D. LIMIT IN S. 19 OF 39 AND 40 VICT. C. 79, AS RESPECTS DAY SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND AND WALES.

After the *last day of March one thousand eight hundred and ninety-seven*, the following words in section nineteen of the Elementary Education Act, 1876, namely, "such grant shall not in any year be reduced by reason of its excess above the income of the school if the grant do not exceed the amount of seventeen shillings and sixpence per child in average attendance at the school during that year, but shall not exceed that amount per child, except by the same sum by which the income of the school derived from voluntary contributions, rates, school fees, endowments, or any source whatever other than the Parliamentary grant, exceeds the said amount per child, and" shall be repealed so far as they apply to day schools in England and Wales.

MR. HERBERT LEWIS (Flint Boroughs) moved as an Amendment to substitute the words "*nine hundred*" for the words "*eight hundred and ninety-seven.*" The hon. Member explained that his object was to defer the operation of this clause for three years, in order that they might ascertain how the first clause worked with regard to subscriptions.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.) said he trusted the effect of the clause would not be to diminish the voluntary subscriptions; but whatever its effect might be, no case could be made out for any further retention of the 17s. 6d. limit. ["Hear, hear!"] The 17s. 6d. limit was open to a great many objections; it certainly was a great temptation to the manipulation of accounts; and it fined poor but efficient schools in a manner highly detrimental to the interests of education. ["Hear, hear!"] Therefore, so far as he was concerned, he would not defer even for a month the operation of this clause. ["Hear, hear!"]

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

On the Question "That the clause stand part of the Bill,"

MR. T. R. BUCHANAN (Aberdeenshire, E.) agreed with the First Lord of the Treasury that there was not much to be gained by the retention of the 17s. 6d. limit. It had already been abolished in the case of necessitous schools in the Highlands of Scotland; and now it was proposed to abolish it in regard to all schools, Voluntary and Board, in England and Wales. Therefore, when the Bill was passed the only part of Great Britain in which the 17s. 6d. limit would exist would be the non-Highland portions of Scotland. There could be no case for retaining it in that limited area, when it was done away with in every other part of Great Britain; and he trusted some assurance would be given by the Government that it would be abolished also in the case of the non-Highland portions of Scotland.

CAPTAIN BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) said that, while the consensus of public opinion was in favour of the abolition of the 17s. 6d. limit, it was undoubtedly the fact that the teachers considered it ought to be retained. A deputation of the teachers of Yorkshire which had waited on him had said they anticipated that if the limit was done away with the managers of the schools would put pressure on the teachers to induce them by additional work, and even by additional cramming, to earn more money in fees for the schools. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. T. R. LEUTY (Leeds, E.) agreed with the First Lord that the 17s. 6d. limit was a fine on poverty, and if there was a division he should certainly vote for its abolition. But after that abolition the children of Nonconformist parents should no longer be driven into schools over which the Church of England retained control, though it paid no part of the cost of maintaining them.

*MR. ERNEST GRAY (West Ham, N.) said he would not discuss whether or not it was wise to abolish the 17s. 6d. limit. But he desired to emphasise the fact that, unless it was followed up by making the grant to all schools a fixed capitation grant, and not a grant dependent on the number of subjects taught, education would be sacrificed to the earning of Government grants. ["Hear, hear!"] He had always felt that the educational training of a child did not depend on the number of subjects in which instruction was given, but on the adequate teaching of a limited number of subjects. ["Hear, hear!"] The operation of the 17s. 6d. limit had been to reduce the number of subjects, and he trusted its abolition would not act as an inducement to managers to take up the maximum number of subjects and to think more of turning the children into grant-earning machines than of properly training their moral and mental faculties. ["Hear, hear!"] There was too much grant-grabbing already in the schools; but he trusted that in future the efficiency of education and not the earning of grants would be the aim of managers. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. A. H. DYKE ACLAND (York, W.R., Rotherham) said that if, as the First Lord of the Treasury had said, no case could be made out for the retention of the 17s. 6d. limit, it ought to be abolished for evening schools as well as for day schools. Again, when this limit was instituted by the Act of 1876, it was applied to England, Wales and Scotland at the same time, and therefore, in order to be perfectly logical they ought to repeal it in this Bill for Scotland as well as for England and Wales. ["Hear, hear!"] The 17s. 6d. limit was introduced by a Conservative Government in 1876 in order to secure the principle of local contributions. If general expenditure on education and the demands of the Department had increased since 1876, those difficulties could have been met by raising the 17s. 6d. limit; but the Government were now abolishing all limits; and the result would be largely to lessen the efforts which produced voluntary contributions; and those contributions many of the best supporters of Voluntary Schools believed to be almost vital to the schools' existence. There was also this consideration—what would be the effect of the removal of the limit on the teachers? There were many poor schools —both Board and Voluntary—where the managers would put great pressure on the teachers to teach more subjects in order to earn a larger grant. The 17s. 6d. limit had hitherto prevented this undue pressure; but what was to prevent it now in schools where the managers were only bent on getting money?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir J. GORST, Cambridge University) said that he could assure the right hon. Gentleman that the Committee of Council were quite alive to the possibility of over-pressure being put on teachers in order to earn larger grants. The abolition of the limit created that danger; but it would be very carefully watched by the Department, and, if necessary, alterations would be made in the Code to prevent any such abuse. There were several ways in which that could be done. One was to make the grant a capitation grant, and not a grant for the teaching of special subjects; and another was to put restrictions on the teaching of special subjects, by requiring that there should be an adequate staff of teachers. The vigilance of the Department would be quite enough to prevent abuse of the abolition of the limit.

Mr. HENRY HOBHOUSE (Somerset, E.) said that, whatever might be the case in respect of day schools, there was a general consensus in favour of the abolition of the 17s. 6d. limit for evening schools. He urged the Vice President to persuade the Chancellor of the Exchequer to consent to this extension of the proposal of the Bill.

Mr. SAMUEL EVANS (Glamorgan, Mid) said that the Government was now doing away with the last shred of guarantee for any local contributions at all. It was very hard that children should be taught a large number of subjects, not in order to improve their chance in the world, but merely to earn a larger grant for the school. The only ground for maintaining the Voluntary Schools was that they were voluntary; but there would in future be no guarantee that the amount of local contributions now secured would be maintained. No sooner was the grant raised to 17s. 6d. in 1876 than the voluntary subscriptions began to diminish. They were 8s. 8d. per head in 1876; in 1894 they were only 6s. 6d. He believed that the repeal of the limit was proposed with the sole object of still further relieving voluntary subscriptions. He should certainly vote for the omission of the clause.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) thought that the answer of the Vice President was satisfactory as to the prevention of over-pressure on the teachers, but he should like to know what was going to be done to secure the maintenance of local contributions. He was enamoured of the 17s. 7d. limit as it stood, but it was the sole remaining safeguard for the maintenance of subscriptions. Why was the 17s. 6d. limit to be abolished in England and Wales, where it affected the Voluntary Schools, and not in Scotland, where it affected the Board Schools?

The SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir Robert Finlay, Inverness Burghs) replied that it would be out of place to deal with Scotland in a Bill which applied only to England and Wales.

Mr. BUCHANAN expressed the hope that the Government, having regard to the peculiar position in which Scotland would be placed by the passage of this Bill as it stood, would during the present Session bring forward legislation to deal with the case of Scotland.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY did not think it would be quite regular to discuss the case of Scotland on the present clause. Scotch Members had always been jealous, and rightly jealous, of mixing up English and Scotch questions of education, the two systems being so diverse. He agreed, however, that the position of the Lowland counties of Scotland after the passage of this Bill would be more or less anomalous, and the matter would be carefully considered.

Mr. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.) said he felt great objection on principle to the abolition of the 17s. 6d. limit. The last shred of guarantee was taken away of securing a certain amount of voluntary subscriptions every year. If his hon. Friend went to a division he would certainly follow him into the Lobby.

*Mr. C. P. SCOTT (Lancashire, Leigh) was in favour of the abolition of the 17s. 6d. limit, because the provision applied equally to both Board and Voluntary Schools. If a few other of the provisions of this Bill had applied in the same way to the whole of the schools in the country they should not be discussing the Bill now; they would have got through it a week or ten days ago. At the same time, the abolition of the limit was not an unmixed blessing, and he warned hon. Gentlemen opposite that if they wished to maintain the existing system they would have to make extraordinary efforts, which they might find it difficult to sustain, in order to keep contributions up to the present level; otherwise the existing system was doomed.

Mr. A. J. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside) said he had never been a strong supporter of the 17s. 6d. limit, but, on the other hand, undoubtedly it was a most effective weapon in keeping up voluntary subscriptions. The danger of the loss of voluntary subscriptions was a more serious one than hon. Gentlemen opposite seemed to realise. If the subscriptions really became merely nominal, the whole *raison d'être* of the Voluntary Schools would disappear, and the end would be that they would be swept away. The danger of over-pressure on the teacher was one which the Vice President held too lightly. He believed that, when they had swept away the limit, the managers who cared more about grants than education would put great pressure on the teachers to enlarge the curriculum and to make the children mere grant-earners, so as to contribute more largely to the income of the schools. He did not see how the Vice President could prevent the pressure being put on the teachers. If the managers demanded that an increased number of subjects should be taught, how was he going to prevent it? It would be impossible to limit the subjects to the three R's. In his opinion, it was far better that these schools should teach the barest elements of reading, writing, and arithmetic than squander the teaching over a considerable number of subjects. This was a thorny question which would require a great deal of attention from the Department and a great deal of watching from the House. With respect to the Scotch question, it would present itself for practical treatment very soon, because, having abolished the limit in England and Wales, they could not possibly maintain it in Scotland.

Mr. LEWIS asked the Vice President or the Leader of the House to give a reply to the very pertinent question of the hon. Member for Poplar—namely, what steps were the Department going to take in order to insure the keeping up of subscriptions?

Question put, "That the clause stand part of the Bill."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 267; Noes, 62.—(Division List, No. 129.)

Clause 3,—

EXEMPTION FROM RATES OF VOLUNTARY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

No person shall be assessed or rated to or for any local rate in respect of any land or buildings used exclusively or mainly for the purposes of the schoolrooms, offices or playground, of a Voluntary School, except to the extent of any profit derived by the managers of the school from the letting thereof.

Mr. SAMUEL EVANS moved after the word "rate," to insert the words "other than a School Board rate." The hon. Member explained that the clause provided for exemptions from all kinds of rates

"in respect of any land or buildings used exclusively or mainly for the purposes of the school rooms, offices, or playground of a Voluntary School, except to the extent of any profit derived by the managers of the school from the letting thereof."

He said that he strongly objected to the whole clause, and at any rate asked that those people who were now so much assisted because they were friends of education should contribute by paying the School Board rate in the district. If all public buildings of this kind were exempted from rates it would be difficult to argue against the clause, and if these schools were used exclusively as elementary schools, there might be a case made out in favour of the proposal of the clause. It was true that the schools were used in the day time for educational purposes, but in every other respect they were practically the private property of the managers or trustees, for the time being, and in many cases it was almost impossible for anybody not connected in some way with the Church of England to obtain the use of any of these schools for any purpose outside what might be approved of by the clerical management. The only rate in regard to which by his Amendment an exception would be made, was the School Board rate, which was an educational rate. The general ratepayers of the district would have to contribute their quota, whatever that might be, to the provision of this £600,000 granted by the Bill to Voluntary Schools, and they would also have to bear their own School Board rate. He did not think, therefore, it was too much to ask that the supporters of Voluntary Schools, which were used in a large measure as private property, should not be exempted from paying an educational rate such as the School Board rate. He begged to move the Amendment.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY could not think the hon. and learned Gentleman was serious in bringing the Amendment before the House, nor had he made out any case for an exception from the exemptions in favour of any rate. If there was one rate more than another which it seemed absurd to throw on the Voluntary Schools it was the rate required for the maintenance of Board Schools. It would savour of, he had almost said, insult, to say that they would relieve the supporters of Voluntary Schools of other rates and still leave them liable to that particular rate which went to swell the pockets of rivals who were the chief source of their difficulties.

*Mr. CHARLES HARRISON (Plymouth) supported the Amendment on the ground that it was not fair and just that the rate for the Voluntary Schools should be practically thrown back again upon those who were already paying the local rates on School Boards as well as School Board rates.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. HERBERT ROBERTS moved to leave out the words "or mainly." The object of his Amendment, he explained, was to provide that the Voluntary Schools should not be exempted from rates unless they were used exclusively for educational purposes. If they were used as other than educational institutions then they ought to pay to the ordinary rates. By introducing into the clause the words "or mainly," a number of very difficult questions would arise, and the door would be opened to all kinds of difficulties and doubts. Who was to be the judge of whether these buildings were used mainly for educational purposes? Suppose, for example, that the Church schools in a country village were used once or twice a year for Church concerns, would that be sufficient to exempt a school from rating liability, or would it have to pay? He urged that it should be laid down clearly once and for all, through this Bill, that if these schools were to be exempted from rating they must be used as schools and schools only. If the managers desired to have the right, which they had enjoyed in the past, of using the schools on certain occasions for other purposes outside those connected with education, then he submitted they ought to pay for that privilege in the shape of not being exempted from rating liability. He begged to move the Amendment.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL hoped the Committee would not accept the Amendment. The effect of the hon. Member's proposal would be that if the schools were not used exclusively for educational purposes, they would lose the benefit of exemption from rates altogether. Thus if they were used for a parish meeting, or as polling stations for parliamentary purposes, or for the district council, they would be deprived of the benefit of exemption, which would be contrary to the spirit of the Act of 1894. There would be no difficulty in determining whether a school was mainly used for purposes of education. The right of exemption would be ascertained in the ordinary way. Exemptions, subject to certain conditions, were already enjoyed by different societies and institutions, by chapels and other buildings, and no difficulty was found in the matter.

Mr. SAMUEL EVANS did not think the Amendment of his hon. Friend quite carried out the object he had in view. His object was to have it declared practically in an enactment that the clerical managers of the schools were to have no benefit or advantage in these schools of a personal character. The Solicitor General had pointed out that the omission of the words "or mainly" would make it absolutely necessary that the school should not be used for any purpose at all other than for elementary education. Thus if the Amendment were carried and a parish meeting were held in the school, it would make it assessable to the rate, although no one on that side of the House objected to such a use of a school.

Mr. ROBERTS asked leave to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

*Mr. EDWARD STRACHEY (Somerset, S.), with a view to prevent Voluntary Schools being exempted from the payment of rates when profit is derived from letting the premises, moved to leave out the words "except to the extent," in order to insert instead thereof the words "so long as no profit." He remarked that in some places the school rates amounted to 1s. and 2s. in the pound in addition to other rates, and if Voluntary Schools were exempted in those cases it would be a valuable concession to them. But sometimes almost prohibitive charges were made for the use of the school rooms for lectures and political meetings, and where a large profit was made in that way he did not think the schools should be exempt from the payment of rates. In future the school buildings would practically be maintained by the State, and, therefore, it was not unreasonable that the use of the schools for public purposes should be without charge. If a profit was made by the letting of the schools, they should be rated on the ordinary estimated value of the school, like any other premises by which a profit was made. The proposal to rate schools according to the profit derived would cause assessment committees much unnecessary trouble. It would also involve a return being made each year by the school managers of their profits. In fact, they would have to make a return like that of Schedule D for the income tax, and this would be no little trouble to them.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL hoped the Amendment would not be pressed, as he did not think a school should be penalised because during the year it had occasionally been let for small local purposes.

MR. HERBERT LEWIS agreed that in ordinary circumstances a school building should be treated as an unoccupied house for rating purposes, but when profits were made by letting the building it was in a different category.

SIR HENRY FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) advised his hon. Friend not to press the Amendment, because its practical effect would be to work injustice. [*Ministerial cries of* "Hear, hear!"] In a large number of country parishes the schoolrooms were the only rooms for any general purpose. They could be used compulsorily for polling purposes and Parish Council meetings, and they should be used compulsorily for other purposes. Parish schools were used for a large number of small entertainments and lectures, which were not only amusing, but instructive. He did not think school managers were bound to let the promoters of these have the schools for nothing, and he was afraid if the Amendment were adopted the managers would refuse the use of the schools rather than lose the exemption from school rates, and this might lead to much public inconvenience.

MR. SAMUEL EVANS said the clause seemed to clearly suggest that school managers had a right to let the schools for profit. He asked the Solicitor General whether they had this right, and, if so, what guarantee was there that the money would not be devoted to educational purposes, but applied by the managers to their own ends.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL said that no right to make any profit was conferred. The words were that the schools should be "exempt from rating except to the extent of any profit derived by the managers from the letting thereof."

MR. SAMUEL EVANS said he never suggested that the words conferred a right. But they indicated that the managers might let the schools for profit. Assuming that the managers did so, was there any guarantee that the money would be applied to educational purposes and not go into their own pockets.

*MR. STRACHEY remarked that, in deference to the wishes of the right hon. Member for Wolverhampton, he would withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. H. LEWIS moved to insert after the word "extent" the words "or the estimated money value of any advantage," with the view to giving Assessment Committees power to inquire into the extent of any profit made by the letting of schools. He submitted that when the managers treated the schools as private property and used them for their own advantage, this power should be given to the Assessment Committee.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL said he did not know what was the precise class of cases to which the hon. and learned Gentleman had alluded. Did the hon. and learned Gentleman mean to suggest the case of the manager of a school giving a private entertainment to his friends? He did not think he had any right to do so. He submitted that the cases supposed did not really in practice exist, and that the effect of introducing the words proposed would not have a satisfactory effect.

MR. LEWIS asked leave to withdraw his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

On the Motion "That the clause stand part of the Bill,"

MR. HERBERT LEWIS said they had hitherto refrained practically from putting forward their chief objection to the passing of this clause. All they could do under the circumstances was to make such a protest as they were able to, but they knew only too well that no protest of any kind, no reason and no argument of any description, would have the slightest effect. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] So far, at any rate, they had had no effect. He was afraid the House of Commons was hardly fulfilling its proper function when the arguments put forward by Members elected to that side of the House were not considered in any way. His objection was that they would not be doing the right thing if they exempted school-rooms from rating which he feared were to an enormous extent used as private property. He knew of cases where the Nonconformists had at great sacrifice built a public hall in the village they inhabited simply in order to assert the right of public meeting. He could mention cases also where clergymen had prevented public meetings being held on the most extraordinary grounds. He protested against the arbitrary way in which the Nonconformists had been treated in the past in regard to the use of the school-rooms, and he therefore begged to move the rejection of this clause.

*MR. HARRISON said he did not know if he would be in order in discussing an amended clause on this question.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS said the hon. Member was entitled to urge upon the Committee as a reason for rejecting this clause that he had a better clause which he proposed to submit, but before the clause of the hon. Member could be discussed in detail this clause must be negatived.

*MR. HARRISON said he ventured to think the scheme proposed by this clause was one which ought not to be adopted. There were two great objections to this clause. The drafting of it was essentially bad. It would not, he thought, effect the object it apparently had in view; and, secondly, as it would cast the deficit caused by exempting the Voluntary Schools on the parish instead of on the fund levied on the area out of which the local rates on School Boards were paid, it would be inequitable. As to the first point, the clause in the Bill did not confer on the Voluntary Schools the benefits it proposed to confer. It contemplated the retention on the valuation list of the Voluntary Schools. It did not wholly exempt them. It would do so if no person was to be assessed or rated, for there would be no beneficial occupation. But the last portion of the clause assumed the schools were to be retained on the valuation list for assessment in respect of profit which they might make. The proper form of drafting should be, not to declare that no person should be assessed for the schools, but that, as in the case of exemption of churches, the property assessed, "the church," the hereditament, should be exempted. It was decided in the case of the Foundling Hospital that, in London at all events, which had a special Act (the Metropolis Local Valuation Act), the property must appear on the valuation list, and that the overseers or other officers would be bound to observe and give the schools the advantage of any privilege or provision for being rated or taxed on any exceptional principle of valuation. But this clause did not give that exceptional advantage to the property of the schools, but only declared no person should be assessed or rated, a provision only advantageous in rating law for the purpose of destroying a beneficial occupation, and therefore a non-liability to be placed on the valuation list at all. This clause would not save the schools from being placed on the valuation lists, and, when placed there, would not confer an advantage or benefit, because it was an advantage or benefit directed to the person, and not to the property. As to the second objection, it was forcibly illustrated in the case of London. The 434 School Boards in London paid for local rates £92,000 a year, or equal, on the 394,000 children in Board Schools, to 2s. 7¼d. per child. That sum was paid as a School Board expense, and was levied in the School Board rate over the whole metropolis. Every ratepayer in each parish was therefore paying for local levies on School Boards 2s. 7¼d. for each child in School Board buildings. On the other hand, the 492 Voluntary Schools were paying £8,666 for local rates, and this Bill proposed to exempt them from this payment. On the 176,552 children in the Voluntary Schools, this payment was equal to a grant by the rest of the ratepayers of the metropolis, already paying 2s. 7¼d. per child for the Board School local rates, of the payment of an additional 11·8d., or nearly 1s., for the Voluntary Schools, which would benefit to that extent over and above the 5s. grant which they would obtain by this Bill. Not only would the London ratepayers collectively pay this rate for Voluntary Schools relief amounting to 1s., but in the case of particular schools they would pay as much as 16s. per child. For instance, Voluntary Schools in Battersea, Charlton, and Woolwich by the exempting of the Voluntary Schools from local rates will be relieved of what was just under three farthings for each child in the Voluntary Schools; whilst in the Voluntary Schools of St. Michael's, Paddington, they would obtain relief to the extent of 6s. 9d. for each child. In St. Bride's, in the City, to the extent of 7s. 7d. per child, and the Saltram Crescent School, Paddington, to the extent of 16s. 1d. per child. This relief so awarded in these particular instances was to be obtained under the operation of the Bill at the expense of the ratepayers in the particular parish in which these Voluntary Schools are situated. But if, instead of referring to particular schools, they turned to the 11 School Board divisions in London, then the relief to the schools in the division would be, in the City, 1s. 7d. per child, in rich Marylebone 1s. 3d., in rich Chelsea 11½d., and all this relief would be effected at the expense of the ratepayers in those particular divisions. If the 2s. 7¼d. paid for local rates on Board Schools was paid out of School Board area, so also ought the 1s. in respect of which the Voluntary Schools would be relieved, instead of having to be made good by other ratepayers, in the parish, ought to be paid out of the same fund and area. That was the provision in the Government Bill of 1896; which, by Section 20, provided that the rates on Voluntary and other schools should not be paid by the parishes but as an expense of School Board area, and levied accordingly. London only reflected the same principle which he had been illustrating in boroughs, where there are often several parishes for local taxation. In all these cases the leakage or deficit caused by abstracting the Voluntary Schools from local taxation should be borne and paid, not by the parish, but by the borough, and out of the borough rate. In regard to counties the same principle applied. The parish in which the particular school was situated should not be called upon to provide the leakage caused by its exemption but the entire area—the county in which the schools are situated ought to bear the expense and not the particular parish. The additional clause he had placed on the Amendment, had that object in view. He submitted it was a scheme far preferable and much more equitable than that proposed by the Bill. For those reasons he supported the omission of Clause 4.

Mr. BUXTON said he did not intend to oppose the clause, but there was one important point connected with it which, as a London Member, he would like to point out. The amount which the Voluntary Schools of London would gain by the abolition of rating, was £8,700. With 173,000 children in average attendance in the schools that sum worked out at 1s. per head in addition to the 5s. grant, so that the managers of the Voluntary Schools in London would receive, not 5s. but 6s. per child. He was also bound to point out that this subsidy to managers of Voluntary Schools would work out very unequally in different parts of London. In the City where managers do not need assistance, it would amount to 1s. 7d. per child, while in the poorer parts of the Metropolis, such as Greenwich, where managers had great difficulty in obtaining subscriptions, it would amount to no more that 4¾d. per child. He also supported the view of his hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth, that the deficit caused by this exemption from rates, should not be borne by the particular parishes, but by the general rate of the Metropolis.

Mr. H. C. F. LUTTRELL (Devon, Tavistock) hoped that the Amendment would be pressed to a division, as he intended to vote for it. The clause proposed to give to the Voluntary Schools an advantage which was not given to the Board Schools, but more than that, by the exemption of the Voluntary Schools from rates, the burden of rates on the Board Schools would be increased, because the rates on the Board Schools must be heavier if the Voluntary Schools were exempt from rates. He did not see why, if by the last clause, they exempted Board Schools from the 17s. 6d. limit, they should not exempt them by this clause from rating.

Mr. SCOTT opposed the adoption of the clause on two grounds. First, because it proposed to exempt from rates what were in fact private educational institutions. And, secondly, because it was partial in its application. A comparison had been instituted between this proposal and the exemption of churches and chapels from rates, but in the latter case the exemption was carried through all round, whereas, in this case, they were selecting a certain category of schools for the exemption, while they declined to extend it to others more deserving of that favour. On what ground were elementary schools to be exempted from rates when the institutions devoted to higher education obtained no such exemption? The Solicitor General said that this proposal was founded on the Act of 1843, which exempted from rating societies established for the promotion of science and the fine arts. But that Act had practically been inoperative, and the only institutions which had benefited from it were Mechanics' Institutes. University Colleges were at least as important as Voluntary Schools; and, after all, the value and quality of elementary education was to a large extent determined by the efficiency and quality of the higher education. The Owen's College, with which he was associated, paid in rates last year over £2,000.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: I do not quite see the relevancy of this.

*MR. SCOTT said that he would not pursue the point. He was merely dealing with the analogy which both the First Lord of the Treasury and the Solicitor General had endeavoured to set up, and which he held to be bad. He would undertake to vote for this clause if the First Lord of the Treasury would give him any encouragement to believe that by subsequent legislation this exemption from rating would be extended to University Colleges.

SIR HENRY FOWLER said that he should vote against the clause on the ground of its inequality. He should be out of order in discussing the fact that the clause did not apply to Board Schools; but if it had so applied, instead of to Voluntary Schools only, he should have voted for the clause.

*MR. ALBERT SPICER (Monmouth Boroughs) said that he disliked preferential grants, but this principle had been practically admitted by the country for some time. In the chief town of his constituency, all the Voluntary Schools were rated at 20s. each, and the Board Schools at a much larger amount. The effect of the clause would be to make people realise that these schools were not private property, but were to be used for the benefit of the public generally. He hoped the Government would see that fair play was given all round in regard to the use of the school rooms; and when the extravagant expenditure of School Boards was referred to in future, he hoped it would be remembered that the cost included rates. He should vote for the clause.

MR. JOHN BRIGG (York, W.R., Keighley) said that, as the Amendment had been ruled out of order, he could only protest against the clause as a whole. He knew what it was to live in a district where the only suitable meeting place was the room of a Voluntary School, and where the use of that room was refused to one political Party.

MR. SAMUEL EVANS said that in some districts Voluntary Schools were now practically exempt from rating; but there the schoolrooms were put at the disposal of the public; so there was no injustice done. He should vote against the clause on the ground that it was part of the Government scheme for the endowment of one or two denominations. An exemption from rates was being given to buildings which were practically under the control of one man—the clerical school manager—who had absolute discretion as to the use of the room, and who used it to tyrannise all over the country. The whole Bill was an iniquitous and impudent attempt to give an additional endowment to a Church already endowed.

MR. HERBERT ROBERTS said that often during election campaigns he had been unable to find a suitable meeting-place, because the clergyman had refused the use of the schoolroom. Welsh Members had special reason to oppose the clause. They did so mainly on the ground that it added to the resources of Church schools from Imperial funds, and did not, on the other hand, confer any public advantage on those who lived in the neighbourhood. There was no necessity for the exemption, because a very large majority of the schools in Wales had more than ample funds. As a protest against the unjust character of the Measure he should divide against the clause.

Question put, "That the clause stand part of the Bill."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 283; Noes, 88.—(Division List, No. 130.)

Clause 4,—

DEFINITIONS.

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires—

The expression "Voluntary School" means a public elementary day school not provided by a School Board.

Any reference to the number of scholars in schools means the number of scholars in average attendance as computed by the Education Department.

The expression "local rate" means a rate the proceeds of which are applicable to public local purposes, and which is leviable on the basis of an assessment in respect of the yearly value of property, and includes any sum which, though obtained in the first instance by a precept, certificate, or other instrument requiring payment from some authority or officer, is or can be ultimately raised out of a local rate as before defined.

Other expressions have the same meaning as in the Elementary Education Acts 1870 to 1893.

*MR. J. A. PEASE (Northumberland, Tyneside) moved to insert after the words "Education Department"

"A school shall be deemed to be "necessitous" if, in the preceding school year, either—

"(*a*) A rate of 3d. in the pound on the rateable value of the school district in which the school was situated, together with any other school district, or part of a school district, for which the school is recognised as available by the Education Department, would have produced less than £20, or less than 7s. 6d. per scholar in the school or schools of the district; or,

"(*b*) A School Board existed in the district in which the school was situated, and a sum was paid to the treasurer of the School Board by the rating authority which was not less than the proceeds of a rate of 3d. in the pound on the rateable value of the district."

Those who had spoken on the Bill had, almost without exception, criticised the vague character of what might be considered a necessitous school under the provisions of the Bill, and the Members of the Government had admitted that the term was somewhat elastic. His object in seeking to define what a necessitous school was, not to limit the necessity to poor districts, but to establish statutory equality with Board Schools. Members would recognise in his Amendment the principle of the 97th Section of the Act of 1870, which applied to Board Schools. He was not himself satisfied with that definition and desired to see it considerably extended. The Conservative Measure of 1876 when it was introduced contained in the 13th Section a special provision as to Parliamentary grants being given to schools in poor districts. In that section, where the Education Department were satisfied a rate of 3d. would produce less than 6s. per head of one-sixth of the population of the school district, special grants would be provided; that then appeared to be the Government view as to what was a necessitous school. It was the intention of the Government that £620,000 should be given to only necessitous schools. Why not, therefore, now define the word, and allow one standard of necessity for Board and Voluntary Schools alike. It was his object to make the law equal in its application. If the First Lord would indicate to them that in the Bill about to be introduced he was going to extend largely the idea of what was a necessitous Board School, he would be glad to alter his Amendment that what was a necessitous Voluntary School should be exactly the same as a necessitous Board School. They ought to see that equal justice was done as far as possible. He knew the effect of his Amendment would limit the number of schools which would receive the aid grant, but where there was no guarantee of efficiency or public representation on the management, it was expedient that the grant should not be given recklessly. His object was to secure and encourage interest on the part of the managers of Voluntary Schools in their schools, and to secure statutory equality, and he therefore moved.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said there were several subsidiary objections, but there was one overwhelming objection which would prevent the Committee being justified in accepting the Amendment. In estimating the poverty of a Voluntary School the poverty of the district was no criterion. ["Hear, hear!"] He thought the suggestion of the hon. Member was beyond the power of any draftsman, as some of those on the Front Bench would admit.

Amendment negatived; clause ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 5,—

EXTENT OF ACT AND SHORT TITLE.

"(1) This Act shall not extend to Scotland or Ireland.

"(2) This Act may be cited as the Voluntary Schools Act, 1897."

Mr. LEWIS moved after the word "to," to insert the word "Wales." He said the Welsh Members had taken particular interest in the Bill because they knew that if it were extended to Wales it would tend to strengthen the Establishment and augment its endowments. If this Bill had been before Wales at the last election, he believed not one Member would have been returned to support it. He was aware that these views did not meet with any sympathy from hon. Members opposite, but he asked hon. Gentlemen to put themselves in the place of Welshmen. The great mass of the people of Wales believed that a cruel injustice was being done to them by this Bill; and the Government would not strengthen the loyalty of the people of Wales by thrusting upon them Measures of this kind, to which they were firmly and unalterably opposed. As Welsh Members they had felt bound to fight the Bill from beginning to end, and so far as Wales was concerned they now made their final protest, believing that it would not bring educational peace to Wales, but that it would rather stir up strife in the country.

*Mr. SAMUEL SMITH (Flintshire) supported the protest of his hon. Friend. The policy embodied in this Bill was exceedingly obnoxious to the people of Wales. It was looked upon as an attempt to stamp out Dissent in Wales. He had been informed by a Gentleman, in whose veracity he had the highest belief, that not long ago his children in one of the Church schools were told by the vicar that Dissenters were all bad people. [*Laughter.*] Indeed, there were intolerant bigots among the Anglican clergy who looked upon Nonconformists as little better than vermin. That was the reason why this Bill, giving as it did increased power to the clergy over the schools, was so obnoxious to the great mass of the Welsh people.

Mr. HERBERT ROBERTS supported the Amendment, and said that the feeling in Wales, as represented in the House of Commons, was without doubt overwhelmingly in favour of the Board School system, and against the Voluntary School system. There was more than one precedent for treating Wales separately in the matter of legislation. There was, for example, separate Sunday closing legislation, and the Intermediate Education Act of 1887. In England the majority of the children attending Voluntary Schools were more numerous than those attending Board Schools; in Wales the reverse was the case. It was hard, therefore, for Welshmen to have a Bill like this thrust down their throats by an English majority. Taking the aid grant of 5s. in the four northern counties of Wales he showed how the Bill would work. It would give to every man, woman, and child in Merionethshire 2s. 0¾d., in Anglesey 3¾d., Denbighshire 4¼d., and Montgomery 5d. In Berkshire, however, it would give 7¼d. per head, Westmoreland 7½d., Rutland 8¼d., and Oxfordshire 8½d. In Merioneth the amount raised by rates and voluntary subscriptions amounted to 6s. 1¼d., but Cheshire would receive per head 8¾d., though it only subscribed in rates 1s. 0¾d. They believed that the Bill would do harm so far as the cause of elementary education was concerned in Wales, and that it would help to buttress the Anglican Church there.

Mr. SAMUEL EVANS also entered his protest against the proposal of the Government. This Bill was purely the result of an English demand, but it was not asked for by any considerable portion of public opinion in Wales. In the first place England was not a School Board country; Wales, on the other hand, if not quite, was very nearly a School Board country. He thought that every real educationist would desire, but for the present condition of affairs with reference to Voluntary Schools, that the secular education of the country should be intrusted to School Boards only. The Voluntary School system was by no means an essential part of the educational system in Wales. Anybody who knew anything of the question must believe that the desire for education was greater in Wales than it was in England, and that the sacrifices made in Wales in its behalf have far exceeded those made in England. There was no other portion of the United Kingdom where a University College had been erected practically out of the pence of the poorer part of the population. ["Hear, hear!"] He would give the Committee a few figures to show how different the case in Wales was to the case in England. No doubt the number of children attending Voluntary Schools in England and Wales was very much greater than the number of children attending

Board Schools, but if Wales and Monmouthshire were taken alone the case was very different. In Wales and Monmouthshire, according to the 1894 Return, the average attendance in Voluntary Schools was 98,829 and in Board Schools 150,000. ["Hear, hear!"] There were one or two specific cases he wished to mention. Glamorganshire and Monmouthshire were two of the richest counties in Wales, and contained a large proportion of the population of the Principality. In Glamorganshire the number of children in average attendance in Voluntary Schools was 30,046, and in Board Schools 71,310. In the case of Monmouthshire the number in average attendance in Voluntary Schools was 12,115, and in Board Schools 24,000, or two to one. In one parish where there were 10,147 children in average attendance, they all attended Board Schools with the exception of 53 who attended a Roman Catholic school. Was it fair that the parents of those 10,000 children should be called upon as taxpayers to contribute to this grant for Voluntary Schools? ["Hear, hear!"] The question might also be looked at from the point of view of population. The whole population of Wales and Monmouthshire, according to the census of 1891, was about 1,700,000, and of that population about 1,400,000 were in School Board districts, so that only about 300,000 were in non-School Board districts. He might further argue the case from the point of view of Disestablishment—[*cries of* "Oh, oh!"] —but that he would not do. He did contend, however, that the Welsh people had shown that they desired their children to be educated in secular elementary schools. But it must not be supposed that because they desired that, they did not care for religion. Who started Sunday Schools in the Principality? Up to recent years the Church of England had entirely neglected religious teaching on Sundays. On the other hand, the Nonconformists had spread Sunday Schools all over the country—["hear, hear!"]—and had shown that the country could produce numbers of volunteers in this work who did not come to Parliament and say, "Do help us by a Parliamentary grant to teach religion." ["Hear, hear!"] There was, of course, no hope of carrying this Amendment, for it was now clear that there was to be no Report stage on this Bill, but he made no apology to the Committee for the observations he had made, because he conceived it to be his duty to put the case of Wales before the Committee, and to show that no one in the Principality was asking for the Bill, and to thrust it upon them was a great injustice to the inhabitants of that country. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. ACLAND said that in the absence of any answer by the First Lord of the Treasury, he would like to say that he thought it quite right that some notice should be taken of the attitude of the Welsh Members. If Wales alone had been concerned, no such Bill as this would have been presented to the House, for there could be no doubt that the educational position of Wales differed materially from the educational position of England. ["Hear, hear!"] In a great number of the rural counties in Wales there were enormous numbers of Nonconformist children attending the schools managed by Churchmen, and there were many parishes where quite two-thirds of the children in Church schools were the children of Nonconformist parents. That children of Churchmen should be forced to go to a school which was controlled by Nonconformists would be considered intolerable by many members of the Church. In many cases in Wales schools had been erected with the assistance of Nonconformist farmers, but no Nonconformist was found on the board of management. [Viscount CRANBORNE: "Why did they subscribe if they disapproved?"] The noble Lord hardly understood the circumstances. Many a Nonconformist farmer had given assistance to a school in order to secure the help of the wealthier members of the parish. If the Government had consented to allow the representation of parents or of local authorities, as they had been asked to do, the attitude of many Welshmen towards the existing Voluntary Schools would have been largely modified. That would have gone far to remove the present grievance. In his opinion the Welsh Members were perfectly justified in endeavouring to get rid of the disabilities and disadvantages of which they complained.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said that the right hon. Gentleman, following the example of the Welsh Members, had dwelt on the fact that in

Wales there were districts containing a large body of Nonconformist children who had no schools to go to except schools under the management of trustees, who must be members of the Church of England. He had himself never denied that that state of things constituted an inequality in our system of elementary education, and had even recently stated that it was one of the inequalities which made the settlement of 1870 a settlement which nobody could defend as logically fair all round. But he had pointed out that, while there was that inequality pressing upon Nonconformists, there were other inequalities under the Act of 1870 which pressed with at least equal injustice upon Churchmen. If they were to permit the extinction of the Voluntary Schools in Wales and elsewhere, the result would be that while the compromise of 1870 would be altered in favour of the Nonconformists it would be left exactly where it was as against all Churchmen. It would be very unfair to attempt, without reconstituting our system of education from top to bottom, which was a task to which he for one did not feel equal to at present —it would be grossly unfair to allow in Wales or elsewhere the voluntary system to come to an end while leaving intact the School Board system and all those inequalities which made that system in certain districts so repulsive—[*Opposition cries of* "Oh!"]—so repellent to the views which Churchmen held on the subject of elementary education. For the rest, it was, perhaps, enough to say that the system of elementary education in Wales had been since 1870 one with the system which applied to the rest of England. He certainly would not be a party, either in connection with this Bill or any Bill that might succeed it, to drawing for the first time a line dividing Welsh elementary education from English elementary education. He could not assent to such a distinction, and certainly he could not consent to make it at this late stage of their discussions. While he recognised the propriety of the Welsh Members making their protest at the present stage, he felt sure that they did not expect the Government to make this alteration which they desired, but which would not be consistent with the broad principles upon which the Measure was founded.

First Lord of the Treasury.

MR. THOMAS ELLIS (Merionethshire) commenting on the statement of the Leader of the House, that since 1870 Wales had been treated in exactly the same way as England, said that that was what the Welsh Members had protested against over and over again. Thousands of Welshmen complained bitterly of the fact that Welsh elementary education was treated by the Department and the House of Commons on the same basis as English education. [The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY explained that his statement referred to legislation and not administration.] Well, administration depended largely upon legislation. He admitted readily that the Welsh Members had been successful in securing certain advantages from the Education Department which had been of real value. By the code and in connection with inspection and examination the Department had acknowledged in the last few years that there was a distinct difference between the conditions of primary education in Wales and England respectively. But that only touched one part of the difficulty in Wales. The chief grievance in Wales arose from the position in which Nonconformists were placed, especially in rural parishes. Before the Act of 1870 many schools were erected in parishes by the co-operation of the Nonconformist inhabitants and the squires and Churchmen. Sometimes these schools were built on land that was given, and sometimes on the village common. In scores of cases, if not in hundreds, these schools so built had passed, often surreptitiously, into the hands of managers under trusts and deeds provided for the training of the children in the principles of the Established Church. In many parishes, therefore, the school built by general effort was now regulated and controlled by the clergyman and one or two Churchmen who were associated with him. That was a state of things which the people naturally resented. The brightest children in the school were, as a rule, Nonconformist children, for they formed the majority. They took the best prizes in the school; yet, if they desired to join the profession of teaching, which lay nearest to them, they were confronted with difficulties. They could not become pupil teachers unless they renounced the religion of their parents—["hear, hear!"] —entered the Church, and became communicants. Was it not a cruel thing for the Nonconformist parents and children in these parishes, where there was only one school, that the children could only gain admittance to the teaching profession by renouncing the religion of their own hearths and homes? There were instances in every county and every town where there was not a School Board, of parents having to choose between the two alternatives of either keeping their child away from the only avenue to the one profession he desired to follow or allowing or forcing him to renounce his own religion and enter the Church of England. ["Hear, hear!"]

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS remarked that this was a little wide of the Amendment.

MR. THOMAS ELLIS thought he would be able to show that his argument bore immediately upon the contention that this Bill proposed really to increase the burden which now lay upon the Welsh people, and it would be better for them educationally, and fairer to them as a people if they gave up the £25,000 to England rather than that it should be used in order to fasten more closely upon their shoulders a yoke they had already found too great to bear. [*Cheers.*] It was not a merely sentimental grievance; but it was one which was felt bitterly in hundreds and thousands of homes in Wales. In a village in his constituency a school was built on common land by the co-operation of the whole village. At last a clergyman came upon the scene who refused to carry out those obligations of honour and neighbourliness upon which the school had been conducted, insisted on taking the school into his own hand, not giving to the Nonconformists any right whatever in the school, and refusing to allow any scholar of that denomination to become a pupil teacher. What was the result? The Nonconformists said they would not pay any voluntary rate, but would establish a Board School. They were not allowed by the Education Department to establish a Board School, for the reason that there was sufficient accommodation in the existing school. So strongly, however, did the Nonconformists feel that, though the Education Department refused to sanction a Board School, they collected £650 and built a school which they carried on until the Department sanctioned it. [*Cheers.*] Out of the 150 children in the parish over 100 at once attended the new school, and the clergyman, seeing it was futile to carry on his school with some 20 or 25 children, at last said he would much prefer they should go to the thoroughly efficient Board School with its excellent education rather than that he should try to keep up a school in which the children could not, from the circumstances of the case, receive nearly so good an education. In another town, also in his constituency, a school built under precisely similar conditions, passed under the trust of the National Society, with the painful result that the Nonconformist children and parents had to choose between the two alternatives he had mentioned. They felt the matter so keenly that, although they were burdened with municipal rates to the extent of 7s. or 8s. in the pound, they collected £700 or £800 in order to build a school, which, when sanctioned by the Education Department, they handed over without a penny consideration to the School Board. [*Cheers.*] He cited these two instances to show what was a real grievance to the mass of Nonconformists in the Principality in those parishes where the Church School was the only school. ["Hear, hear!"] The feeling in Wales was one of a strong desire, stronger even than that for the disestablishment of the Church, to have a complete public system of national education. [*Cheers.*]

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: I really do not see the relevancy of this. Even if the Amendment which the hon. Member is supporting was carried, the grievances to which he refers would not be remedied.

MR. THOMAS ELLIS admitted this, but said that by the Bill the grievances of Wales would be doubled. [*Cheers.*] Without entering into any argument between Voluntary and public schools, all he would say was that the desire of the overwhelming majority of the Welsh people was to have a public system of education such as they had in Scotland; but to ask them to agree to £25,000 being spent to increase a grievance which they already felt bitterly was to make a proposition which no free people would desire to accept. [*Cheers.*] If the Bill had permitted of it they would have asked for an equivalent grant to be devoted to purposes which they thought would be of infinite value to all forms of elementary, technical, and secondary education in Wales. [*Cheers.*]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY remarked that the speech of the hon. Member had caused a feeling to arise in his mind which he certainly should never have expected to discover there—namely, a desire that they should have heard more of the Welsh Members in this Debate—[*laughter and cheers*]—for certainly, whether they agreed or disagreed with the hon. Member, they must admit that he had made a most excellent and interesting speech. [*Cheers.*] It was, perhaps, enough for him to say in reply that while the hon. Gentleman had, with great eloquence and force, explained what he himself had always deemed and now most freely admitted to be a blot in their present educational system, he had absolutely shut his eyes to the corresponding difficulty under which members of the Church suffered in Wales and in other places. [*Cheers.*] Those who had preceded the hon. Gentleman on the same side had explained to them that in Wales there was a larger proportion of children educated in Board Schools than in any other part of the country, and the hon. Member had concentrated his attention upon those parts of Wales where the whole education of the children, whether of the Nonconformist or the Church, was intrusted to Church Schools. But surely there were other parts of Wales where the whole education of Church children was intrusted to a system which Churchmen did not like? The hon. Gentleman would like to see the whole scheme of 1870 upset so far as Wales was concerned. But that was neither a practical proposal nor was it the proposal before the House. When the time came for such a policy to be proposed, he did not think that any violent opposition on his part would be discovered. ["Hear, hear!"] While he could not think it could be justly said that the Bill intensified the grievances of any Nonconformists in Wales, it did something to prevent new grievances being laid upon the shoulders of Churchmen. [*Cheers.*]

MR. LEUTY, speaking amidst persistent cries of "Divide" from the Ministerial Benches below the Gangway, said there were one or two points he wished to answer briefly, and his answer would apply to England as well as Wales, but he would speak only of Wales. Had the Leader of the House during the whole of the discussions given to the representations made from the Opposition side of the House the same kindly consideration which he had bestowed upon the remarks of the hon. Member below (Mr. T. Ellis) any effort of his to relieve the legitimate grievances of Churchmen would not have been opposed. The right hon. Gentleman said that in the School Board districts, "You take our children, you teach them reading, writing and arithmetic, but you do not teach them any creed or catechism." He (Mr. Leuty) sympathised with Church people who had that feeling, and he would go a long way to meet their conscientious scruples; but it was woeful when the Leader of the House said that the grievances of the Church people in England and the Nonconformists in Wales were parallel. ["Hear, hear!"] There was a great grievance which Dissenters suffered under. That was in districts where the whole of the children had to go to a Church school, and where they were taught to believe things that their parents disbelieved. They were not only taught things that their parents disbelieved, but which their parents looked upon as neither more nor less than superstitions. He did not himself say whether they were superstitions or not. If hon. Gentlemen opposite had the true interests of the Church at heart they would be ashamed of crying "Divide." They evidently did not see where the true interests of the Church lay. Our forefathers would not be penalised out of existence, and Nonconformists would not be bribed out of existence, as this Bill attempted to do. The evils which Churchmen sought to remove were as nothing to the evils under which Nonconformists laboured; and he had the utmost contempt for this attempt by a haughty, intolerant Party to put Nonconformists under a pecuniary disadvantage, and to drive their faith out of existence. [*Opposition cheers.*] He had used more forcible language than he should otherwise have done, because of the impertinent interruptions to which he had been subjected. [*Cheers and counter cheers.*]

MR. PRYCE JONES (Montgomery Boroughs) said he merely wished, as a Welsh Member, to say that he should vote for the Government with the greatest pleasure. He was not prepared to decline to receive on behalf of Wales an annual sum of about £25,000. ["Hear, hear!"] But he was bound to say that, for one, he did not agree entirely with the Bill. He regarded it as a departure from the compromise of 1870. Still, he looked forward to a similar grant to the one proposed being made this year or next year to the Board Schools of the country. Then he hoped his hon. Friends opposite would be more satisfied with the Government than they were now. ["Hear, hear!"]

Question put, "That the word 'Wales' be there inserted."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 61; Noes, 198.—(Division List, No. 131.)

On the Question, "That the clause stand part of the Bill,"

MR. J. DILLON (Mayo, E.) took the opportunity of asking the First Lord of the Treasury what he proposed to do in the way of an equivalent grant for Scotland and Ireland for Voluntary denominational schools. If Clause 5 were omitted from the Bill this grant in aid of 5s. per child would be available in respect to all schools in Scotland and Ireland which were not supplied by School Boards. In Ireland no schools were supplied by Boards, and in Scotland there were a considerable number of Voluntary Schools. Therefore, before they agreed to the passing of this clause, he thought the Government should take the opportunity of saying what they proposed to do for schools in Scotland and Ireland by way of an equivalent grant for this large grant which was now being made to the denominational schools in England. He desired to point out to the First Lord that this afforded an opportunity for settling that very vexed question with regard to religious schools in Ireland. The principle of the Bill was to encourage and to maintain schools of this kind in England which were giving denominational religious instruction. Now they had in Ireland a number of schools in which denominational religious instruction was given as part of the system.

*MR. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked whether the hon. Member was in order in referring to the Irish system of education upon this Bill.

THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. GRANT LAWSON): I do not think he would be in order in referring to the whole system of education in Ireland, but he would not be out of order in asking a question thereupon.

MR. DILLON said he was about to say there were a number of schools in Ireland corresponding to those in England, which were assisted by this Bill. He could not but feel surprised that the hon. Member for South Belfast, who had so steadily voted for this Bill, should rise and protest against any attempt being made to induce the Government to give a like support to denominational schools in Ireland, and it would appear that the hon. Member changed his principles when he crossed the Irish Channel. [*Laughter.*] He had not the least idea of debating the Irish system, but he desired to take what he thought a very reasonable opportunity of asking the Government to take into consideration the desirability of announcing that they would make a reasonable equivalent grant to Scotland and Ireland in respect of this £600,000 now being granted to denominational schools in this country.

*MR. JOHNSTON: May I ask, Mr. Grant Lawson, whether I should be in order if I were to discuss the question of a Roman Catholic University for Ireland? [*Cheers and laughter.*]

THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. GRANT LAWSON): No. [*Renewed laughter.*]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I may remind the hon. Member that the schools in Ireland have to be supported entirely out of public funds without the assistance of subscriptions or rates, and have been so ever since the National system of education was started there.

MR. DILLON: Not the Christian Brothers' Schools.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I am speaking of the general system of education, which is denominational in the sense in which we understand it in England, and I say again that National system is supported entirely out of public funds, and therefore I do not think the occasion for the hon. Member's question arises.

MR. DILLON said the Christian Brothers' Schools were strictly denominational Voluntary Schools, and they corresponded to the schools that were dealt with in this Bill. His point, and he thought he might now ask for an answer, was, that if Clause 5 were omitted, the

Christian Brothers' Schools would come under the Bill. The object of the Bill was to encourage Voluntary religious denominational schools, and therefore, he asked, would it not be fair to supply to Ireland an equivalent grant for the same purpose for religious Voluntary Schools in Ireland. In reply to what the right hon. Gentleman had said, no doubt the educational system in Ireland was denominational, and had become so owing to the pressure of public opinion, and much to the indignation of the hon. Member for South Belfast. [*Laughter.*] But it was not practically denominational in the same sense as Voluntary Schools in England were, and the only schools in Ireland which corresponded from the religious point of view to those Voluntary Schools in England were the Christian Brothers and Convent Schools. He should press on the attention of the Government that they ought to set apart an equivalent grant for Ireland to be applied for the same purpose as the grant under this Bill was to be applied for the encouragement of separate Voluntary religious Schools.

Clause ordered to stand part of the Bill.

On the return of the CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS, after the usual interval,

MR. HERBERT LEWIS moved the following new clause:—

DURATION OF ACT.

"This Act shall continue in force for three years after the 31st day of March next after the passing thereof and no longer, unless continued by Parliament."

He was prompted to move this limitation by reason of the fact that a large portion of the Bill was of a purely experimental character. It was impossible to tell at present how the associations would work. It was difficult to know to what extent they would be formed, or whether, when formed, they would be able to work in such a manner as to command the confidence, on the one hand, of the Education Department, and, on the other, of the country. It was also difficult to foresee the way in which the voluntary character of the schools would be maintained. It was quite certain that, in regard to the schools affected by the abolition of the 17s. 6d. limit, the subscriptions would be very materially reduced. But unless some definite term were prescribed for the termination of the Act, it would be practically impossible to raise the question again by way of legislation. The House was so overburdened with work that once an important question like the Voluntary Schools question was legislated upon, it was bound to remain quiescent for many years unless the operation of the Act was limited to a certain period.

Clause read the First time.

On the Motion "That the Clause be read a Second time,"

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER, Isle of Wight) said he did not agree with the contention of the hon. Gentleman that this Bill was in the nature of an experiment, but he would point out that nothing worse could be done to prevent an experiment having a fair trial than that it should be stated in the first instance that the whole thing would be ripped up in a few years and become again the subject of discussion. He could not help thinking that the hon. Gentleman had overlooked one initial fact which had been admitted on both sides of the House. Though it was quite true that a few scattered Members had expressed their detestation of the Voluntary system, and that if they had their way there would be only Board Schools in the country, at least two distinguished occupants of the Front Opposition Bench had stated more than once that though they thought, when the Board School system was established, the Voluntary Schools would have gradually dropped out of existence, they had been forced to the conviction that the Voluntary Schools were an essential and integral part of our educational system, and that the country had distinctly decided so at the last General Election. Therefore, to limit the operation of the Bill to three years in order that the question might be again discussed, would be very unfair to the Voluntary Schools, which had been proved to require aid from the State. The hon. Gentleman knew that aid to the necessitous Board Schools formed part of the scheme of the Government, and that a Bill to that effect would be introduced when the state of things allowed it. Would the hon. Gentleman propose that the Board Schools should be subjected to the same experimental arrangement? The hon.

Gentleman had said that as a result of the Bill the subscriptions to Voluntary Schools would fall off. The Government held a distinct conviction to the contrary. When the Voluntary Schools were less handicapped by the competition of the Board Schools, there would be an increased inducement to Churchmen to subscribe liberally in order to make the secular part of the education of the Voluntary Schools more efficient than it was at the present time. Unless there was a special reason for it, Parliament never inserted a time limit in a Bill, and there was no subject to which they should be slower to apply such a provision than the subject of primary education.

*MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Notts, Mansfield) said he had not supposed that this Amendment would commend itself to the Government any more than any of the numerous Amendments which had been already moved; but he had a conviction that this Amendment would be regarded with great favour throughout the country by the real friends of education, no matter what might be their political opinions. He supported the Amendment because the Bill was admittedly a very incomplete Bill. It was also full of vague phrases and ambiguous provisions; and what was lacking in it had not been supplied in the discussions by the Government; indeed, the greater the desire for information on the part of the Opposition in regard to doubtful points the greater was the alacrity of the Government in having recourse to the Closure. That brought him to his second point, which was that the Bill had been forced through Committee——

THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. GRANT LAWSON): Order, order! The hon. Gentleman is not in order in discussing his dissatisfaction with the proceedings in Committee.

*MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS said that what was to be said on that point would have to be said on another occasion. He would therefore pass to another reason in support of the Amendment. The First Lord of the Treasury had admitted that the association scheme was quite experimental, and though the right hon. Gentleman was very sanguine as to its results, a large number of educationalists, Churchmen as well as Nonconformists, regarded it with grave misgiving. Another reason in favour of the Amendment was that the Bill involved the solution of very critical and difficult questions by the Education Department. He would be surprised if, after the lapse of a short time, the authors of the Bill proved to be altogether satisfied with their handiwork. No one was quite satisfied with the Measure except the Members of the Government. Hon. Members opposite were not satisfied with it. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] They had spoken of it in terms of absolute contempt; and out of doors the Bill had met with a degree of opposition on the part of Nonconformists, Churchmen, and educationalists which Measures of this House had not commonly to encounter. For these reasons, and others he might name, he suggested that the Government should follow the precedent they themselves set in the case of the Agricultural Rating Bill, by limiting the operation of the Bill to three years.

MR. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.) said that the Leader of the House himself had admitted that the clause of the Bill dealing with associations, to which he attached most importance, must be experimental; and the noble Lord the Member for Rochester had described the Measure as vague, as an earthwork hastily thrown up for the defence of the Voluntary Schools, as a temporary Measure, and so forth. It was true that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Montrose had said that the Voluntary Schools were an essential portion of our elementary educational system, but he did not say that the provisions of this Bill dealing with compulsory association were an essential portion of our elementary educational system. Amongst the clergy there was a great deal of opposition to the compulsory association clause, and indeed generally there was every disposition to treat the present proposals as of a temporary nature. With regard to the distribution of the grant, questions must crop up in the course of the next three years which would give rise to friction. Difficulty must surround the fixing of the different rates for town and country. There was the question whether the areas were to be large or small, and only the other day the Leader of the House said it was impossible for anyone to foretell how the abolition of the 17s. 6d. limit would operate. For these and other reasons he heartily supported the Amendment. It seemed to him that one of the effects of a three years' limit would be absolutely salutary. It would cause managers of schools to see that the voluntary subscriptions were not reduced but increased, and it would create the keenest desire on their part to maintain the efficiency of the schools.

MR. D. F. GODDARD (Ipswich) did not think the Amendment could be opposed on the score of unreasonableness. Everyone would admit that the Bill had a good many novel features. For that reason alone it was desirable there should be some limit to its operation, or some opportunity of reconsidering its methods in a few years. Voluntary Schools had hitherto been recognised as elementary schools, but now, for the first time, they were to be recognised as denominational schools. For that reason, too, some limit should be placed on the operation of the Measure. The Attorney General had said it was not usual to put a limit upon legislation. [The ATTORNEY GENERAL: "No."] Surely there was a very recent and wise precedent for the admission of a clause like this in the Agricultural Rating Bill of last year.

[The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS in the Chair.]

Question put, "That the Clause be read a Second time."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 63; Noes, 198.—(Division List, No. 132.)

MR. J. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) moved the following new clause:—

ENDOWED SCHOOLS.

Where an endowment is attached to any school to which an aid grant might be made under this Act, the existence of such endowment shall not be deemed to be a ground for withholding the aid grant from such school; but if any aid grant is paid to such school under this Act provision may be made, either by scheme or by an arrangement to be sanctioned by the Education Department, that a part of the annual income of the endowment, not less than the sum paid to the school in the same year in respect of the aid grant under this Act, shall be applied for the educational benefit of the scholars in such school, whether by means of advanced classes or of exhibitions or maintenance allowances.

A scheme to be made as aforesaid may be made under the provisions of section seventy-five of the Elementary Education Act 1870, as applied by section three of the Endowed Schools Act, 1873, or under the provisions of the Charitable Trusts Acts, 1853-1894, or under the provisions of the Endowed Schools Acts, 1869 to 1889, as may be proper in each case.

He said that there were a large number of small endowed schools in the country which were now used as elementary schools. These schools were established before the present century, at a time when there was no general provision for education in the rural districts, beyond the old dames' schools. A parish which received the gift of an endowed school in those days had a great benefit and advantage over its neighbours. But in the course of the present century the conditions had completely changed. Public elementary schools were now universal, and a large number of these old endowed schools had come under the Department and were regularly inspected for the grant. The parish with the endowed school was no better off now than the neighbouring parishes, which had schools supported partly by private subscriptions and partly by public grant. But if the parish were no better off than its neighbours, somebody must be better off. Who was it? It was the well-to-do people in the parish whom the endowment relieved from the necessity of subscriptions. That was hardly a happy result for a charity intended by its pious founder to benefit the poor. If the endowed school were by reason of its endowment held to be non-necessitous, and, therefore, not entitled to the aid grant, there would be a practical injustice by depriving the school of the benefit which its endowment ought to give it over other schools. There was a great want of schools in the rural districts which give a superior education to that which was provided in the elementary schools, and it had been suggested with all the weight of a Royal Commission, that one useful way in which a better education could be provided would be by choosing a certain number of schools, especially those which possess endowments, and placing them, so to speak, in higher departments, and in those higher departments the education of the promising children might be carried further, and in that way the whole parish might be benefited. That was the line which might be followed in the case of the schools in question. If they received the aid grant from the Department, it seemed reasonable to require that such increase to their endowment should be used to confer higher benefits on the inhabitants of the whole parish, and especially to the poorer inhabitants.

Clause Read the First time.

On the Motion "That the Clause be Read a Second time,"

The FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said everybody would so far sympathise with the right hon. Gentleman as to think he had not gone beyond his duty in pressing forward the interest of secondary education. After all his Amendment and speech had nothing whatever to do with primary education; their relation was to secondary education; and the speech went a little beyond the limit of the Amendment.

MR. BRYCE explained that the endowments he alluded to were those which might be said to be on the border line between elementary and secondary, and whose teaching might be called higher grade elementary.

The FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY had never been quite able to distinguish between higher grade elementary and secondary, and being incapable of drawing such a line he would not follow the right hon. Gentleman in the argument he had developed. But he would put a case. Supposing there was a school with an endowment of £5 a child. To ask the House to vote part of the £620,000 a year to schools which already had an endowment of £5 a child appeared to be a proposition so extravagant that it really ought not to be entertained for a moment. [*Cheers.*] There were schools in many of our poorer districts in which really the endowment was nothing more than a capitalised subscription. But there was a great difference between such cases and laying down as a guide to the Education Department that, no matter what the endowment of the school may be, it was not to be counted as eliminating the school from the class of necessitous and placing it in the category of non-necessitous. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would feel that while they sympathised with the object it was impossible for the Government to accept the Amendment.

MR. ACLAND pointed out that there were a considerable number of endowed schools which were really not Church schools but undenominational schools. If such schools were anxious to escape association they might do so under Subsection 5 of Clause 1, under the claim that they did not belong to the religious majority of the association, being undenominational schools. That might be urged as a reason for treating, at any rate, endowed schools of that sort somewhat tenderly. He was not at all sure that the pious founder had any desire when he left his money for the benefit of education to relieve landlords and wealthy squires of another generation. He thought it was perfectly fair to hold the view that the great mass of them intended to do something for the education of the children. It, therefore, appeared to him that in the distribution of these grants they ought not to take away money because the pious founder left that money many years ago for the benefit of the children. If they did not give these parishes their fair share of the grant they would be alienating a portion of the money left by the pious founder. Why should they seek to alienate it? Why should the manager not be allowed to keep the children at school a few years longer, and give them a fair share of the aid grant? The manager was entitled to say, "Do not take away from me my share under the plea that I am not necessitous because we happen to enjoy an endowment conferred on us in days gone by."

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Rochester) agreed with the right hon. Gentleman opposite that an endowed school ought not to be penalised because of these grants. A rich school ought not, of course, to be treated as a poor school was treated. The money was contributed for the purpose of education and especially of religious education, and in that respect it should be treated as subscriptions. He hoped that in the administration of these grants they would treat the endowments as nothing more or less than voluntary subscriptions, and not allow existing endowments to in any way penalise any school.

MR. ELLIS GRIFFITH (Anglesey) supported the clause proposed in the clause, which he thought was entitled to favourable consideration.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.) said he happened to be one of those persons to whom reference had been made by the right hon. Gentleman. He was what was called "a pious founder"—[*laughter*]—not at all by his own wish. [*Laughter.*] He regretted that the First Lord of the Treasury could not understand why the money should be kept back simply because there was an endowment.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) thought it was somewhat strange that hon. Gentlemen opposite should now be urging that there should be no distinction between necessitous and non-necessitous schools. He had always urged that it was impossible to distinguish between the two, because nearly all schools were necessitous.

Mr. BRYCE, in asking leave to withdraw the clause, hoped that the discussion would have the effect of calling the attention of hon. Members to the extreme gravity of the question.

Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

Sir H. FOWLER moved the following new clause:—

REPORTS TO PARLIAMENT.

The Education Department shall in every year cause to be laid before both Houses of Parliament a report of the proceedings under this Act during the preceding year.

He thought that this was a reasonable demand to make. He hoped that the First Lord of the Treasury would reserve the consideration of this Amendment for another place, and would hold out some hope that there the matter would be fairly reconsidered, and the Amendment, if possible inserted. He would not press the Committee to divide, but his request was strictly in accordance with Parliamentary precedent.

Clause read the First time.

On the Motion "That the Clause be read a Second time,"

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY said he thoroughly appreciated the spirit in which the right hon. Gentleman moved his Amendment, and assured him that substantially his contention would be carried out by the manner in which the Act would be administered by the heads of the Department, as in the case of the earlier Acts. He promised the right hon. Gentleman that the propriety of introducing specific directions in the Bill would be carefully considered at a later stage.

Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. ELLIS GRIFFITH (on behalf of Mr. Lambert, Devon, South Molton) moved the following new clause:—

MEETINGS OF GOVERNING BODIES TO BE OPEN.

The proceedings, deliberations, and meetings of the governing body of every such association shall be open to the public and the Press.

Mr. G. C. T. Bartley.

They had always contended that the proceedings of these associations should be made public, the object being to secure that publicity without which the association would not do their work properly. The association was an irresponsible body; it would neither be elected nor selected by the managers of the schools, and they did not know that every Voluntary School would be represented on the association. It would, therefore, be unfair to them if no official knowledge was given of what took place in the association. The associations would also deal with half a million of public money, and he maintained that there was no precedent for a public body, representative or non-representative, dealing with a large sum of money not having their deliberations made known to the public. When the associations knew that their work was open to the criticism and inspection of the public they would be more anxious to do their work properly.

Clause read the First time.

On the Motion "That the clause be read a Second time,"

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY said there was an apposite precedent in the case of the School Boards of the country. There was no statutory requirement on the part of the School Board either to admit the Press or the public. While he had the greatest respect for the public and the Press he saw no reason why the Government should insert a clause requiring their presence.

Mr. T. LOUGH (Islington, W.) thought that a great deal of valuable information would be furnished by the deliberations of the associations to those who took an interest in educational matters. The objection taken as to School Boards was hardly conclusive, because the School Boards were publicly elected bodies. The electors saw that the proceedings were fully reported, and the public had means of acquiring information, so that there could be no secrecy about the proceedings. Besides, the minutes of the School Boards were open to the inspection of the public. [Sir J. Gorst dissented.] The objection of the right hon. Gentleman, therefore, was not conclusive.

Clause negatived.

Mr. J. W. LOGAN (Leicester, Harborough) moved the following clause:—

DUTIES OF TEACHERS.

No teacher employed in Schools which receive aid grant under this Act shall be required to perform any extraneous duties, that is to say, any duties other than those of teaching in the school and instructing pupil teachers therein.

He said he could give very numerous instances of advertisements by managers of Voluntary Schools for teachers who were not only able to teach the children but also to play the organ, train a choir, or perform other extraneous duties. In his opinion, teachers should not be required to do anything but teach the children. The question whether or not a teacher was a communicant in the Church of England had nothing to do with his appointment as a teacher. ("Hear, hear!"] The advertisements showed that only a very small remuneration was offered for the performance of those extraneous duties, and it came to this, that, in many instances, the money of the nation was being used to pay a church organist. But there was a more important question than that involved, and that was, that teachers for Voluntary Schools were not chosen, as they ought to be, because they were people best qualified to teach the children, but because they were good organists or good Churchmen and promised to be communicants. ["Hear, hear!"] He knew it would be useless to appeal at that stage to the First Lord for any attention to this demand, but he felt it his duty, in the interest of the education of the country, to move the new clause.

Clause read the First time.

On the Motion, "That the clause be read a Second time,"

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY said that this clause, whatever might be its merits, would put a most unmerited disability on teachers in Voluntary Schools as compared with those in Board Schools. The teacher in a Board School might teach in a Sunday school, or perform other duties of the kind mentioned by the hon. Gentleman; but, if a teacher in a Voluntary School undertook to do the same things, the hon. Gentleman proposed that the school in which he was a teacher should be deprived of the whole amount of the aid grant. Moreover, if he was to interpret the views of the hon. Gentleman, it seemed that the hon. Gentleman would go further, and make it impossible for the unfortunate teacher in a Church school to communicate in the Church to which he belonged. [*Laughter.*] That, he thought, was a degree of tyranny which the hon. Gentleman in his more careful moments would hardly venture to further. ["Hear, hear!"] He trusted the hon. Gentleman would not put the Committee to the trouble of a division. ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. ACLAND thought the right hon. Gentleman had not quite realised the actual meaning of the clause. The words of the clause had been most carefully drafted—[*Ministerial laughter*]—by a very skilful draftsman, who knew exactly what was intended, and he was perfectly certain that the words absolutely fulfilled the intention. The whole point was that no teacher "should be required" to perform these extraneous duties—["hear, hear!"—that in engaging a teacher the managers should not require or demand from him extraneous duties of the sort mentioned. The desire of the vast majority of the teachers of this country had been to see something of this sort on the Statute-book, and he believed that the clause was a perfectly sound one. ["Hear, hear!"] The question was whether a teacher when he was engaged ought to be required to perform any other duties than that of a teacher. There was no objection to teachers entering voluntarily into arrangements to do other work. What they did object to—and they were right to do so—was that in their engagements as teachers other matters should be included. Many hon. Members opposite had assented in the past to the view embodied in this clause. It was a reasonable demand to make that teachers should not be asked to undertake, in connection with churches, chapels, etc., duties which lay outside the limits of their profession. It would be a great relief to a large number of persons who were entering the teaching profession, and to a large number who were already in it, if it were quite understood that managers could not impose any extraneous duties upon them, and that the performance of such duties should be purely voluntary. It should also be understood that their salaries were salaries for teaching only, and that if any additional remuneration was to be given to them it must be kept quite separate from the sums they received as teachers. The members of the profession naturally valued the idea that they were appointed primarily as teachers and not for other duties, and held that they ought not to be dismissed except for faults committed in their teaching capacity. Everybody must desire that the teaching profession in elementary schools should be dissociated from extraneous duties, as it was in public schools, secondary schools, and the universities. If a teacher was invited to undertake work on Sundays, or other duties, that work ought to be treated as something quite separate from his work as a teacher. That was the feeling of tens of thousands of teachers. The Amendment before the Committee was a most reasonable one, and the principle which it embodied ought to be put in the Statute Book.

*MR. GRAY felt bound to say a word or two on behalf of the principle of the Amendment before the Committee. He believed that the First Lord of the Treasury had not noticed the particular form in which the Amendment was proposed to the Committee, for the right hon. Gentleman's argument was based upon the wording of the earlier Amendment, to which no one, he felt sure, would have assented, because it would have fettered the hands of the teachers and prevented them from accepting appointments outside their teaching work, even when they desired to accept such appointments. That Amendment, however, was not before the Committee. There was a very great deal to be said on behalf of the Amendment that was before it, and he should not have hesitated to place a similar Amendment on the Paper himself, if he had realised that it would be in order. There was no doubt that teachers were often appointed subject to their consenting, at a time when they were naturally anxious to obtain employment, to undertake all sorts of parochial duties not connected with the work of teaching. It was a common thing for managers to advertise for persons who would undertake, not only the duties of a teacher, but some half-dozen other occupations as well. By such action a school was frequently deprived of the services of the best teacher, an inferior teacher being engaged, because he was more competent to perform extraneous duties. There was yet a further obstacle in the way of progress. When a teacher had won the affections of the children, the appreciation of the inspectors, and the regard of every inhabitant in the district, some little friction would be caused in connection with the performance of some extraneous duty, and as a result the teacher would be dismissed. This compulsory performance of extraneous duties was one of the greatest blots in our educational system. The practice was not limited to the Voluntary Schools; there were many School Boards in the country that were equal sinners on this respect. [*Opposition cries of* "How!"] In Church schools the extraneous task was often that of playing the organ in church, in Board Schools it was not unfrequently the task of presiding at the harmonium in the parish chapel. [*Laughter.*] The right hon. Member for Rotherham had said that he would desire to see this proposed clause applied to the case of teachers in all schools. What could be the object of that suggestion, unless the right hon. Member knew that the change was as necessary in some of the smaller Board Schools of the country as it was in the Voluntary Schools? If hon. Members opposite wanted instances to show that the clause ought to be applied to School Boards as well as to voluntary organisations, no doubt the right hon. Member for Rotherham would be able to supply them with such instances. The exigencies of the moment necessitated that if this clause were pressed to a division a vote should be recorded against it. He understood that; but he affirmed, without hesitation, that there were many hon. Members on his side of the House who in other circumstances would have assented willingly to the principle of the proposal before the Committee. They were as anxious as he was that the best teachers should be secured for schools, whether Voluntary or Board Schools, and that as long as a teacher's character, professional and moral, was beyond reproach—as long as he discharged satisfactorily his duties to the managers, the Department and the parents in the district—he should not be subject to capricious dismissal in connection with the performance of some task quite unconnected with the work of the school.

Extraneous services willingly given would be of far greater value, both to the Church, the teachers, and the schools, than services unwillingly wrung out of teachers who feared that unless they were performed they must be turned adrift in the world, not merely at an age when it was difficult to obtain employment, but often with such resentful feelings left behind on the part of managers of schools that it was frequently impossible for them to obtain recommendations for appointments in other schools. There was much to be said in favour of the Amendment, but he hoped it would not be pressed to a division. [*Cries of* "Why?"] Because he believed it would be injurious to the object they had in view to have an adverse vote recorded upon it. He took exactly the same line as the right hon. Member for Wolverhampton, who withdrew his Amendment because he believed it would be injurious to have an adverse vote recorded upon it, and because he recognised the necessity of having the Bill passed through its closing lines without Amendment. [*Cries of* "Why?"] Those who were interrupting him had been longer in the House than he, and they ought to know what the result would be if an Amendment were accepted at this stage. Everybody recognised that position, though, perhaps, hon. Members opposite would rejoice in having a free hand to repeat the stupid Amendments that were placed on the Paper in the earlier stages of these proceedings. He hoped the Amendment would not be pressed to a Division.

MR. SAMUEL EVANS remarked that the hon. Member for West Ham, who had described some of the Amendments proposed from the Opposition side of the House as stupid, seemed to have forgotten that he had supported several of them. The hon. Member now desired that this Amendment should be withdrawn lest he should be obliged to go once more against the Government to support whom he had been returned to Parliament.

*MR. GRAY hoped the hon. Member would not further misrepresent what he had said, or at any rate had intended to say. What he tried to represent to the Committee was that if the time expended on unreasonable proposals had been devoted to reasonable Amendments, there would have been opportunities of discussing them and of actually getting them inserted in the Bill. The fact that there had been such a large number of other Amendments, which he ventured to criticise as stupid, had prevented some of the Amendments which he had supported being embodied in the Bill.

MR. SAMUEL EVANS replied that he had not seen any disposition on the part of the Government at any time to accept Amendments, however reasonable, and the hon. Member had not indicated a single Amendment which ever had a chance of acceptance from the Government. The present Amendment, he submitted, was one upon which every Member was entitled to have his vote recorded, and if pressed to a division he should not be surprised if the hon. Member himself would not be driven to vote for the new clause. He had never before heard the argument used that they ought not to amend a Government Bill because they thereby escaped one stage. Again, what an argument it was to advance to the Committee that the Amendment could be introduced in another place! The Amendment might be good, but they apparently in the Commons were not wise enough to carry it through. Were they to relegate that very important part of their work to the unrepresentative Members of another place? If the Amendment was a good one there was no reason whatever why the Government should not adopt it. The teachers of this country, and of Voluntary Schools more especially, had been for some time agitating for some kind of guarantee of fixity of tenure, and the hon. Member would agree with him when he said that the support given the Bill by the Voluntary School teachers was in a great measure given because they themselves hoped that some provision of this kind would be introduced into the Bill. They knew that this money was to be given to the schools, and the hon. Member himself voted in favour of an Amendment proposed by the hon. Member for Huddersfield in favour of the teachers having some share of it. This proposal was in precisely the same direction. Those who knew the circumstances of the case knew there was very solid ground for this Amendment. [MR. GRAY: "Hear, hear!"] The hon. Member who represented in that House a large body of the teachers admitted that this Amendment was a good one, and yet he asked them not to press it to a division. The reason why the right hon. Member for Wolverhampton withdrew his Amendment was because a pledge was practically given by the First Lord of the Treasury that there should be every year a full statement of the proceedings under this Act and of the application of the money made to the House. No such pledge had been given in the present instance, nor had there been any promise that the Amendment should be introduced in the other House. The hon. Member for West Ham would admit the authority of Mr. Macnamara to speak for the teachers in this matter, and he would quote two or three extracts from Mr. Macnamara to show the importance of this Amendment. He had a case before him where a schoolmaster with less than £100 a year and 70 children on the rolls had to be organist, choir master, parish clerk, Sunday school superintendent and teacher, bell ringer, clerk to the County Council, *i.e.*, a Conservative County Council. [*Laughter.*] Another master, with £77 a year, had these extraneous duties: organist, playing on Sunday, choir practice 40 times a year; "when the Vicar's wife is absent, I play once on Sunday." [*Laughter.*] Another master with £76 a year, which had been reduced because the voluntary subscriptions had not been kept up, had these extraneous duties (there were 57 children in his school): to arrange for the school cleaning; Sunday school, morning and evening, organist, paid a little extra (quite an exceptional case); act as choir master, attend to the savings bank (these were great people for money, they collected it whenever they could get it), and assist with Band of Hope meetings. The conclusion of the matter was (a serious matter) a schoolmaster or teacher ought to be selected on the ground that he was a good teacher, and knew how to instil learning into the children. If so selected he should be allowed to devote the whole of his energies to his work and not be required to undertake any extraneous duties. If a school-master or teacher did his work properly he had not much time for these extra duties. He ought not to be liable to dismissal, not because he was a bad or unpopular master, but because he did not fulfil these duties.

*Mr. J. H. YOXALL (Nottingham, W.) said there was a comic side to this, no doubt, but there was also a serious and sympathetic side. It was perfectly reasonable that a teacher employed in a denominational school should belong to the denomination of the school in which he taught, and render the ordinary service to the denomination which other members of same denomination gave. If this extraneous work were not compulsory, no doubt teachers would render voluntary unpaid service as many members of a denomination other than teachers did. But teachers specially trained and examined, *quasi* State servants, and paid mainly out of State money, should be required before taking employment to undertake only the work in schools for which they were trained. With their daily teaching and their instruction to pupil teachers there was quite enough work, and he most strongly objected to these compulsory tasks of an extraneous character being imposed. This might not be the best part of the Bill to introduce the prohibition, but he should support the protest. It would be outvoted, no doubt, but he was not without hope that the Education Department would secure the object of this clause by regulations.

Motion made, and Question put, "That the Clause be read a Second time."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 96; Noes, 237.—(Division List, No. 133.)

Bill reported, without Amendment, amid loud Ministerial cheers.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY, whose rising was greeted with Ministerial cheers, said: I propose to put this Bill down for Third Reading on Monday. But the right hon. Gentleman opposite made an appeal to me, which, especially as there is no Report stage, I feel bound to agree to, that Monday is too soon. Therefore, though putting it down for Monday, I shall, on Monday, defer it until Thursday in next week if there is no Vote of Censure moved on that day. [*Loud Ministerial cheers.*] If, on the other hand, Thursday is required by the Opposition for a Vote of Censure, I shall feel bound, however reluctantly, to take Tuesday for the Third Reading.

MR. J. MORLEY: I have to thank the right hon. Gentleman for the courtesy and consideration with which he has responded to the appeal I made to him. I think the appeal was thoroughly well founded, for, as the right hon. Gentleman has told us, there is to be no Report stage to this Bill, which is in itself a very remarkable circumstance—[*cheers and counter cheers*]—a circumstance so remarkable that no doubt we shall have to call attention to it here and elsewhere. [*Ministerial laughter and Opposition cheers.*] To-night we had dispatched Clauses 2 and 3—clauses which were practically not largely controversial—in a spirit which I am sure the right hon. Gentleman opposite will be the first to acknowledge. [The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: "Hear, hear!"] But it might be inferred from the conciliatory and business-like way in which those two comparatively non-controversial clauses have been conducted that the Debate on the first clause, which is really the contentious clause of the Bill, and is, in fact, the substance and body of the Bill, has been, though I will not admit that, unduly prolonged. [*Ministerial cheers.*]

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): Speech!

MR. J. MORLEY: With all respect to my right hon. Friend, I am speaking strictly to the question as to the date for which the Third Reading of this Bill is appointed. However, I have no intention of prolonging these remarks, except to notice that the right hon. Gentleman said, as I understand, that he would put the Bill down nominally for Monday, but with the intention of taking it really on Thursday, unless my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition should ask Thursday for what the right hon. Gentleman calls a Vote of Censure. Upon that point I would say that the question of whether we shall ask for Thursday, or what day we shall ask for, will undoubtedly depend upon whether the Government's policy has been so developed—[*Ministerial cries of* "Oh!" *and* "Norwich!" *and Opposition cheers*]—and has taken such practical and operative form as to compel us to ask the right hon. Gentleman to give us Thursday for the examination of that policy. That is our position. Meantime, and subject to those contingencies which may arise—and whether they arise or not will depend on the Government—we, of course, are perfectly willing to acquiesce in the arrangement which the right hon. Gentleman has mentioned to the House.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE hoped that Tuesday would not be diverted from private Members, for there was a very important Motion, in which Churchmen were largely interested, down for that day. The House of Commons did not exist mainly for the convenience of the two Front Benches—[*laughter*]—and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Montrose and his colleagues would make up their minds at once whether there was to be a Vote of Censure or not on Tuesday, in order that the fate of the Motion to which he had alluded would be known as soon as possible.

MR. LOUGH (who was received with Ministerial cries of disapproval) said he only rose to support the appeal of the noble Lord, as he had got the second place on Tuesday for a Motion, and he therefore hoped the Government would leave the day to private Members.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Ask your own Bench. [*Ministerial cheers.*]

MR. LOUGH: Unfortunately, our own Bench has not control of the affairs of the House. [*Opposition and Ministerial cheers.*]

Third Reading put down for Monday next.

MILITARY WORKS (MONEY) BILL.

Considered in Committee.

[The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS in the Chair.]

[PROGRESS, 22ND FEBRUARY.]

Clause 2,—

BORROWING FOR PURPOSES OF ACT, AND ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT.

(1.) The Treasury may, if they think fit, at any time for the purpose of providing money for the issue of sums out of the Consolidated Fund under this Act, or the repayment to that fund of all or any part of the sums so issued, borrow money by means of terminable annuities for such periods not exceeding *thirty years* from the passing of this Act as the Treasury may fix, and all sums so borrowed shall be paid into the Exchequer.

(2.) The said annuities shall be paid out of moneys provided by Parliament for army services; and if those moneys are insufficient, shall be charged on and paid out of the Consolidated Fund or the growing produce thereof, but shall not be payable as part of the permanent annual charge for the National Debt.

(3.) The Secretary of State shall in every financial year cause to be made out and laid before the House of Commons an account, in the form required by the Treasury, of the money expended and borrowed and the securities created under this Act, and the accounts of expenditure under this Act shall be audited and reported upon by the Comptroller and

Auditor General as appropriation accounts in manner directed by the Exchequer and Audit Departments Act 1866.

MR. LOUGH said the clause dealt with the way the money for the works was to be obtained. It left it to the discretion of the Secretary of State for War and the Treasury to borrow the money, or to obtain it in some other way which was not defined. He moved, in Sub-section (1) to leave out the words "may, if they think fit at any time," and to insert the word "shall."

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford) said if the Amendment were carried the Treasury would have to put the taxpayers to the expense of borrowing the money for the military works, even though it might be otherwise available. That was a suggestion which he was sure the Committee would not support. ["Hear, hear!"]

Amendment negatived.

MR. LOUGH moved to omit from Subsection (1) the words "all or any part of." As the clause stood, the money might be divided into two parts—one to be borrowed and the other obtained in some mysterious way. His object was to rid the clause of that indefiniteness.

MR. BRODRICK opposed the Amendment on the ground that the effect of it would be precisely the same as that of the Amendment they had just negatived.

Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 186; Noes, 65.—(Division List, No. 134.)

MR. HUDSON KEARLEY (Devonport) moved in Sub-section (1) to leave out the word "*thirty*," and to insert the word "*fifteen*." He said that the latter period was far too long, as the bulk of the works would be finished in five years. He would remind the Committee that under the Naval Works Act, under which powers were taken for the expenditure of a large sum of money on works of a permanent character, the money was repayable in seven years. He thought this was an Amendment which ought to be accepted. There could be no doubt that 30 years was too long. It was a bad principle taking out of control of the House of Commons the voting of money year by year; it was a far worse principle to borrow money and distribute the repayment over such a lengthened period as 30 years, because, long before the period was expired the works would be decayed or have been swept away.

MR. BRODRICK said the hon. Member could hardly have considered that the period of 30 years was fixed according to the precedent of the Barracks Act. The only reason which the hon. Member assigned was that the works were not of a permanent character, but he had by no means established that fact. On the contrary, the works scheduled under the Bill, including as they did the purchase of land and the building of barracks, which would probably last 100 years, were of a very permanent character.

MR. COURTENAY WARNER (Staffordshire, Lichfield) submitted that 30 years hence many of the works would be quite out of date. Ranges put up 30 years ago, for example, were of very little use to-day, and they did not know what, like the ranges would be 30 years hence.

MR. DUNCOMBE rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put," but the Chairman withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

Debate resumed.

MR. COURTENAY WARNER said, therefore, they ought to pay for them long before 30 years had expired. Even admitting they had done wrong in days gone by, that was no reason why they should go on doing wrong. He appealed to the Government, if they could not go the whole way, to reduce the period, say, to 15 or 21 years; and so meet their views to a certain extent.

MR. DUNCOMBE rose in his place and claimed to move "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 158; Noes, 57.—(Division List, No. 135.)

Question put accordingly, "That the word '*thirty*' stand part of the clause."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 159; Noes, 56.—(Division List, No. 136.)

And, it being after Midnight, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

PUBLIC HEALTH (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Second Reading [5th February] further adjourned till Monday next.

FOREIGN PRISON MADE GOODS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

MILITARY LANDS ACT (1892) AMENDMENT BILL.

Committee deferred till Monday next.

BERRIEW SCHOOL BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

KINGSTOWN HARBOUR ROADS TRANSFER BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

LAW OF EVIDENCE (CRIMINAL CASES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ALDERSHOT AND FARNBOROUGH) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

ARCHDEACONRY OF CORNWALL BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

On the Motion "That this Bill be now read a Second time,"

Mr. KEARLEY objected to the Bill being proceeded with at that hour. It was an important Measure, dealing with the whole of Her Majesty's Forces on land and sea, at home and abroad, and it was entitled to a proper discussion. The Bill dealt with soldiers, sailors and marines, and as a large portion of his constituents were members of one or other of the Services he naturally was interested in the Measure. When he mentioned that such an important subject as courts martial was raised it would be recognised that this was not an occasion when they could adequately discuss the matter. Dealing with the question of courts martial there had been a great amount of evidence—

*Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman can deal with that particular question when the Bill is in Committee. He cannot go into questions of detail now.

Mr. KEARLEY said that he merely wanted to mention generally the question of courts martial.

*Mr. SPEAKER: That is a matter of detail and not the general question.

Mr. KEARLEY desired to point out that the Judge Advocate General no longer existed and the responsibility of re-hearing the judgments of the courts martial was to be committed now to a Judge, over whose action the House had no control.

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! The question before the House is whether there shall be a general Code governing the Army. A discussion of the details of the Measure would be more properly discussed in Committee.

Mr. KEARLEY said he understood that on a Second Reading Motion he was at liberty to discuss the whole area of the Bill. His constituents were much interested in the matter, and he thought hon. Members were entitled to ask that the Second Reading should be deferred until they had had an opportunity of studying a Measure of this importance. The hon. Member moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned," but Mr. Speaker, being of opinion that the Motion was an abuse of the Rules of the House, declined to propose the Question thereupon to the House.

Mr. LOUGH appealed to the Government to postpone the Second Reading.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY said the request was most unreasonable. This was the annual Bill brought in maintaining the discipline of the Army and Navy. There was no change in it last year and there was no change this year, and no question arose upon it that the House need discuss.

*Mr. W. WOODALL (Hanley) said that, having had that assurance, he hoped his hon. Friends would not oppose the Second Reading, notwithstanding the bad example set in regard to a similar Measure by hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite when the position of Parties was reversed.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time, and committed for To-morrow.

TRUSTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Third Reading deferred till Monday next.

SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday 2nd April.

COUNTY COUNCILS (QUALIFICATION OF WOMEN) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday next.

INDUSTRIAL AND PROVIDENT AND INCORPORATED BUILDING SOCIETIES (PURCHASE OF FEE SIMPLE) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday 5th May.

STEAM ENGINES AND BOILERS (PERSONS IN CHARGE) BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Motion for Committal to Standing Committee on Trade, etc. [17th February] further adjourned till Monday next.

POOR LAW OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday 29th March.

MERSEY CHANNELS BILL.

Read a Second time, and committed for To-morrow.

TRUCK ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday 25th March.

LICENSING EXEMPTION (HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY, in moving "That this House do now adjourn," gave notice that to-morrow he would move the suspension of the Twelve o'Clock Rule, not because he at all contemplated a prolonged sitting after Twelve o'clock, but because it was the last day for getting through certain financial business, which he believed would be accomplished long before the magic hour of midnight; but he wished to guard against possible accident.

MR. LOUGH asked what were the Votes it was essential to get through, and would the right hon. Gentleman mention the business for Monday?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said the Votes were, if he remembered correctly: Vote 1 for the Navy; a small Supplementary Vote for the Army; Vote 1a ought also to be taken for the Navy; and there was the Ways and Means Resolution. The first business on Monday would be the continuation of the Committee on the Military Works (Money) Bill.

MR. KEARLEY asked if there was an intention to take Vote 8 to-morrow?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. R. W. HANBURY, Preston) said that Vote was excepted.

MR. KEARLEY inquired if other business than Estimates would be taken?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said he proposed to follow what he thought had proved the good practice, of taking only Estimates on Friday.

MR. J. CALDWELL (Lanark, Mid) asked what would be the Second Order for Monday?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: The Second Reading of the Public Health (Scotland) Bill.

SIR WILFRID LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth) was understood to ask whether the Licensing Exemption (Houses of Parliament) Bill was a Government Bill?

LORD STANLEY (Lancashire, Westhoughton) said it was not a Government Bill in any sense of the word, but was brought in by the Kitchen Committee for the benefit of the House.

MR. KEARLEY asked whether it was intended to take the Committee stage of the Army (Annual) Bill after Twelve o'clock on the following night.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said that if the hon. Gentleman would put a question on the subject down upon the Paper he would answer it to-morrow.

MUSEUMS OF THE SCIENCE AND ART DEPARTMENT.

Ordered, That Mr. Donal Sullivan be discharged from the Select Committee on Museums of the Science and Art Department.

Ordered, That Mr. Daly be added to the Committee.—*(Mr. Thomas Ellis.)*

House Adjourned at Twenty-five Minutes before One o'Clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, 19th March 1897.

INTEGRITY OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE.

SPEECH BY LORD KIMBERLEY AT NORWICH.

*THE PRIME MINISTER (The MARQUESS of SALISBURY): I have given the noble Earl private notice that I wish to call attention to some observations which he is reported to have made at Norwich, and first about a matter of very little importance, which is a purely personal question. The noble Lord said—

*THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: Is the noble Marquess quoting from *The Times* report?

*THE PRIME MINISTER: Yes. These are the words used by the noble Earl:—

> "It so happened that it was his duty the previous night to ask the Prime Minister to make a statement to Parliament on the policy which was being pursued by the Government, and he received for answer that he might find that policy stated, not by the Minister of the Crown, but by the Minister of France."

I have a report of what passed in this House, and the noble Lord's interpretation of it departs so widely from what actually took place that I feel it necessary to contradict it lest I should be supposed to admit the statement to be true by default. He did not ask me precisely to make a statement of the policy of the Government. He asked me whether I was

> "in a position to make any statement as to the determination now come to by the Powers with regard to their course of action as to Greece and Crete."

My reply was:—

> "The only answer I can give to that Question which states any fact not already formally known to the House is, that instructions have been given to the Admirals for the blockade of the island of Crete. Beyond that I do not think that there is anything which corresponds with the description implied by the Question of the noble Earl."

In my answer I did not state that he must not come to a Minister of the Crown but should go to a Minister of France, but I went on to say that he would

> "find an admirable statement of the policy of the Powers, though not containing any fact or many facts absolutely new, in the speeches of the Minister I referred to."

Then again the noble Lord said he would prefer to hear a statement from Her Majesty's Minister, and I replied:—

> "I think the House has heard all I can give in explanation of the policy of the Powers to which Her Majesty's Government have assented. I am not aware that I have omitted anything."

As the House knows, I have on one or two occasions made quite as fully as I was asked to do, and I believe as fully as the subject permitted, statements of the agreement the Powers had come to, and had told the noble Lord absolutely everything I knew which the Powers had agreed to. I think, therefore, it is something of an outrage that the noble Lord should go down to Norwich and state there that, when he asked for a statement of policy, I had told him he must go, not to a Minister of the Crown, but to a Minister of France. ["Hear, hear!"] Well, that is a private question that really does not matter very much, only I do not wish to allow the statement of the noble Lord to remain without absolute contradiction and to be accepted as a fact by reason of any default of mine. But there is something much more important in the noble Lord's speech at Norwich to which I wish to call attention, and that is with respect to the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. The noble Earl made this statement:—

> "He found from the statement of the French Minister that the policy of this Government was the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Were we to approve of that policy which had for its basis the integrity of the Ottoman Empire?"

Then again at the end of his speech the noble Earl said:—

> "He would only say that every one of them in that meeting was convinced that the cause of freedom should be advanced, and repudiated and utterly refused to accept a policy which was based upon the integrity of Turkey."

Now this is a very momentous statement, and, if made at all, should have been made in this House—should have been made where it could be dealt with. It is a momentous statement, not only by reason of its intrinsic character, but because of the position of the man who made it. The noble Lord who made that statement was himself a Member of the Government by which the integrity of the Ottoman Empire was made part of the law of Europe. He has held office again and again since then, and quite recently he was Minister for Foreign Affairs. I am not aware that he has given to anybody on any occasion any ground for the belief that he had repudiated the policy which the chief he served and the Government to which he belonged solemnly adopted and to which they put the name of England in 1856. ["Hear!"] It is only now that he has done it. He will tell me that the Sultan of Turkey has behaved very badly in the last two years, and I do not traverse that statement. I admit it to the full extent, and I deplore and condemn what has been done as much as he can. ["Hear, hear!"] But if his declaration of the policy solemnly declared by his Party and the Foreign Minister in whom they trusted, before Europe, and agreed to by England in the face of Europe, is to be given up because only during two years there have been actions on the part of the Turkish Government which deserve the deepest condemnation, I think the policy was either very lightly adopted or very lighted abandoned. [*Ministerial cheers.*] But beyond that it is not merely the past which must be considered. It is his future. If the present Ministry went out of office the noble Lord would probably be Minister of Foreign Affairs. He comes in with an announcement that he is pledged to disregard that which all Europe has, up to this time, adopted as the basis of its policy. A graver statement could not have been made, and I repeat that it should have been made in some more formal manner, and with some fuller statement of reasons, than on a Party platform at Norwich. I feel how heavy a blow the noble Lord has dealt at the policy of this country. Of course, I may say what I please, for I am only the holder of an office until such time as I vacate it, and when I vacate it, it will probably be held by a statesman who has pledged himself to disregard the solemn signature of England with regard to one of the most important treaties of the century. ["Hear, hear!"] I do not take the integrity of the Ottoman Empire for a permanent dogma. It was established by the Legislature of Europe; it was established, it has been modified by them; no doubt it will be modified again. But this is the first time, as far as I know, that a man who has been Foreign Minister and will probably be Foreign Minister again, declares in the face of Europe that he will disregard the signature of his country, and, not with the consent of the other Powers, but in their face, will tear up the engagements to which he has come. [*Ministerial cheers.*] I feel bound, at all events, to separate myself as strongly as possible from that declaration. ["Hear, hear!"] I do not by any means hold to the doctrine that the integrity of Turkey will not be modified. It may be very likely modified in the future, but what is done will be done by the consent of all the Powers by which the integrity of Turkey was made part of European law. Much was said, not, I think, by the noble Lord, but by those who stood by him, in condemnation of the Powers of Europe on this occasion. At least it may be said for them that they are representing a continuity of policy, and that they are maintaining the law of Europe as it has been laid down by the only authority competent to create law for Europe. They have been defied by a State which owes its very existence to the Concert of Europe. Had it not been for the Concert of Europe the Hellenic kingdom would never have been heard of. They have been defied—if breach of obligations and disregard of former statements is any aggravation—under circumstances of the gravest aggravation that could have taken place. In point of international law, Greece has not a shred of right to the island of Crete she has invaded—I say in point of international law, and the Powers of Europe appear as the defenders of international law, believing that unless it be respected the peace of the world is worth a very few years' purchase. [*Ministerial cheers.*] I know that there are those, and I suppose the noble Lord opposite is one of them, who appeal to some higher law, whose precise provisions I do not know, but by which what would have been a filibustering expedition in any other

Power in this case is a righteous act, because of some superior obligation, I do not know where it comes from, but which is deduced by a subtle logic which I cannot follow from the fact that the battles of Thermopylæ and Salamis were fought 2,000 years ago. [*Laughter.*] Crete is not the only island in the world which is dissatisfied with the Monarchy to which it is attached; and other races, too, have in the distant past hopes and traditions of which they are proud, and to which the poets among them love to appeal. If the Thermopylæ and Salamis argument is to be taken into the law of Europe, it will not be only the Turkish Empire, it will not be only the Treaty of Paris which will be affected by such a novel doctrine. ["Hear, hear!"] I feel it is our duty to sustain the federated action of Europe. I think it has suffered by the somewhat absurd name which has been given to it—the Concert of Europe—and the intense importance of the fact has been buried under the bad jokes to which the word has given rise. But the federated action of Europe—if we can maintain it, if we can maintain this Legislature—is our sole hope of escaping from the constant terror and the calamity of war, the constant pressure of the burdens of an armed peace which weigh down the spirits and darken the prospects of every nation in this part of the world. ["Hear, hear!"] The federation of Europe is the only hope we have; but that federation is only to be maintained by observing the conditions on which every Legislature must depend, on which every judicial system must be based—the engagements into which it enters must be respected. ["Hear, hear!"] They must not be treated as pieces of waste paper to be torn asunder at will in obedience to any poetical, or rhapsodical, or classical feeling that may arise. It must not be denounced by the Ministers who have been partisans and colleagues of those by whom they were signed. It must not be thrown over at the mere will of an outside Power, whose motives it is not for me now to canvass, but which is no just subject for the eulogies that have been passed upon it. I think I may add that the maintenance of that federation of Europe will be increasingly difficult if every statesman who has retired from public life thinks it right to fling insults at the Sovereigns who occupy the principal thrones of Christian Europe. [*Ministerial cheers.*] I think these are very grave matters, which should be submitted to your Lordships' House. I cannot cavil because the noble Lord chooses to entertain notions which are certainly eccentric amongst statesmen, and which are entirely novel in himself. But I do cavil at the time he has selected to reveal them, and at the mode he has adopted in order to enforce them on his countrymen. ["Hear, hear!"] At all events, I wish to say that we have no part in them, and that, whatever measures the Concert, the federation, of Europe may in the future, in its wisdom, think it right to take with respect to the integrity of Turkey, we will be no party to a violation of that integrity without their authority, consecrated as it is by congresses the most solemn, by negotiations the most important, by events which should have pressed their value upon every mind, and having been, in the minds of some of the greatest statesmen we have had—statesmen not belonging to this side of the House—the foundation of European order, and of the policy which this country has consistently pursued. [*Cheers.*]

*THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: Let me just say a word on what the noble Marquess mentioned, and called a private matter. I need scarcely say, and I am sure the noble Marquess will believe me when I say, that I have not intentionally misrepresented him. For my part, although I have heard the contradictions the noble Marquess has given, I am quite unable to perceive how I did misrepresent him. It is quite true that he commenced his answer to me by stating that the only information he could give was that instructions had been given to the Admirals to institute a blockade of Crete. I may mention, though I do not attach special importance to it, that something else was told to the other House—namely, that a communication had been addressed to the Powers, and for that reason, I think it was added, nothing further could be told. I do not lay too much stress upon it, but that is the fact. But the noble Marquess went on, as he himself has quoted quite correctly, to refer to statements which had been made the day before in the French Chamber. The noble Marquess bases part of his objection to my view of what he had said upon my having asked a Question as regards the Powers. I put the words "the Powers" in my Question because the noble Marquess objected to my asking, on a previous night, what was the policy of Her Majesty's Government, or something to that effect. The Powers included Her Majesty's Government—and necessarily included Her Majesty's Government—and what I wished to hear was what was the policy of the Government as regards the course which had been determined upon. It is by no means necessary, nor is it at all probable, that, when the six Powers come together to determine upon a course of action in a very difficult and grave matter, they will be all actuated by the same motives of policy. In fact it cannot be so. The French have their own interests, and, of course, in coming to a determination are actuated by a care for those interests. And so have all the other Powers. They may come to the same conclusion, but the grounds upon which they will come to that conclusion will necessarily not be the same, and what I desired really to know were the grounds and the reasons for which Her Majesty's Government had determined on a particular course. Of course, I did not word my Question in that way; it is not usual to ask what are the reasons. I asked what course had been determined upon, leaving it to the noble Marquess, perhaps, to tell me that it was impossible to give at the moment any further explanation, which I should have accepted at once. I confess I was not a little surprised when he referred to the statement of the French Government, both because I thought a statement should have been made by him, and that no statement by a foreign Government, even where there was a perfect agreement as to the course of action, could adequately represent the policy of any one of the Powers; each Power must state its reasons and policy itself. Those were my reasons. My object was certainly not an attack upon the noble Marquess, but I felt disappointed at not having learned what the policy of Her Majesty's Government had been, more particularly as it happened that I was about to make a speech in the country. If the noble Marquess had told me he was not in a position to make any further observations because it would be prejudicial to the public interest, I should have accepted that at once, and should have said I could not go very far because the situation did not allow of remark on that particular point. But when I was referred by the noble Marquess to the speeches of M. Hanotaux and M. Méline, I looked with some anxiety to see precisely what they had said, and I found that the principal statement was that the French policy rested—it was not "based," the word was "rested"—upon the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Now, the statement I made—and I admit fully and entirely it was a very grave statement indeed, at least as far as I am concerned, though I do not attribute to my words the influence which attaches to the words of the noble Marquess—the statement I made, after full consideration and with a complete sense of the responsibility in making it, was that I meant, as far as I had any influence, to dissociate ourselves plainly and distinctly in the future from the policy upon which, no doubt, our course with regard to the Ottoman Empire has been based in the past. I fully admit that such a statement made by any public man, holding a position of any influence in this country, is a very grave and a very responsible one. Now, when the noble Marquess says that, in making that statement, I committed myself to a disregard of a treaty which was concluded by a Government of which I was a Member—not, of course, as the noble Marquess knows, a Member of the Cabinet; I was a subordinate Member; but, still, I was Under Secretary in the Foreign Office, and, therefore, to rather a greater extent than an ordinary Member of the Government not connected with the Foreign Office would have been, I was responsible. I admit responsibility for what took place. I am not going to defend what was then done, or enter into the reasons which actuated the Government of that day, but my view is this—that the then policy has not only failed, but that the integrity of the Ottoman Empire has been put aside and repeatedly violated, and disregarded, and treated as a mere fiction by every Power of Europe. My Lords, my present view, looking at the whole subject, is that, whatever may have been concluded in 1856, it is idle to say that British policy is now to be bound by it as if it were a treaty concluded yesterday. The Treaty of 1856 has been completely violated over and over again by European Powers, however much the violation may have been sometimes veiled by what I have heard called a convenient formula. That is not a treaty which can bind us to such a degree that, if we think another policy is required, we are not allowed to change our policy. The noble Marquess, in a very remarkable speech at the commencement of the Session upon the Address, in answer to Her Majesty's gracious Speech, referred to the failure of that policy. It was a failure, of course, of the policy of reforms by which the integrity of the Ottoman Empire had been sought to be preserved; and he said, further, which was a statement almost startling, but I find no fault with his saying so, that in the momentous decision come to by the Government of that day and by Lord Clarendon, who was then my chief, to reject the propositions of the Emperor Nicholas I., we put our money on the wrong horse. Now could there be a greater condemnation of the policy on which the Treaty of 1856 was based? I was very much surprised when I heard the noble Marquess, in the speech I have mentioned, base his views upon the Treaty of Paris. I thought he should have based them, as certainly, if I had had the honour of being in his position, I should have based them, upon the Treaty of Berlin. But the facts are so notorious that I am almost ashamed to refer the House again to what took place at the time of the Treaty of Berlin. Not one, but several, provinces were severed from the Ottoman Empire; and although Lord Beaconsfield may, in a happy phrase, have called that a consolidation of the empire, what was it but a complete violation of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire and a putting of it aside? It is true that a great conference —a congress, I might say, of all the Powers—was held to ratify what had been done. But that was to ratify what had been done by Russia, who had torn up the Treaty of 1856, and, by war, had put it aside. There was a solemn meeting of the European Powers. What to do? Not to defend the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, but to ratify its having been torn to pieces. Again, after that the Government of which I had the honour of being a member severed from Turkey—joined with the Powers in severing from Turkey—the Province of Thessaly, and in giving it to Greece. I need not enumerate all that was done, such as the annexation by Austria of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is true that in some of those cases the fiction of the Porte's supremacy was preserved, as in the case of Cyprus. In other cases provinces of Turkey, which previously had been under the suzerainty of the Porte, were made independent. Take Servia and Bulgaria, which were made independent; and Eastern Roumelia was placed in a position not far removed from that. My view is—and it is a deliberate view, and one which I have been long tending towards, and only the events of the last year or two have brought me to an absolute conclusion—my view is that a policy which has been thus treated is no longer a sound basis for the European policy of this country. Does it follow necessarily because I say that the policy of this country is not to be based on the integrity of Turkey, that you are forthwith to proceed to tear Turkey to pieces? Not so. But what I object to is this—that the basis of our policy should be a treaty which, as I say, has been very often violated or treated as only a formula. I believe the time has come when it is the duty of men who think as I do to do their best to disconnect this country absolutely from that policy. My Lords, the fact is this—and I do not think the noble Marquess will differ from me—that the Turkish Empire is a standing danger to the peace of Europe. [*Cheers.*] It is a sort of gangrene which eats into the peace and tranquillity of the whole of Europe, and to say that our policy is to be based upon what must be the permanent maintenance, as I understand, on account of our obligations by treaty, of that empire——

*THE PRIME MINISTER: Until those obligations are removed.

*THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: Quite so. To say that our policy must be based permanently upon such obligations seems to me to be not only inconsistent with the interests of this country, but inconsistent with that which I hold with the noble Marquess, and as strongly as he does, as a matter of the most paramount importance to every State in

Europe, and to this country as much or more than any other—namely, the maintenance of peace. ["Hear, hear!"] The noble Marquess knows as well as I do that there comes a time when circumstances make treaties worn out, and the wearing out of a treaty is shown when it is constantly violated, put aside, and treated as fiction. ["Hear, hear!"] Although I entirely admit that in so grave a matter the noble Marquess, for whose opinion I have the greatest respect, and others may differ from me, I think what I have recommended is the true policy and the wisest policy for this country. I say there is nothing in the Treaty or in the present situation of the world which should preclude anyone in my position from announcing, as I did announce and as I wish to announce, and to repeat, that I believe it is for the interest of this country and it is for the interest of European peace that we should be disconnected for ever from regarding the integrity of the Empire of Turkey as the basis of British policy. [*Opposition cheers.*]

ISLE OF MAN (CHURCH BUILDING ACTS) BILL [H.L.].

House in Committee (according to Order): Bill reported without Amendment; Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be Read 3ª on Monday next.

SURVEYORS (COUNTY DUBLIN) BILL.

House in Committee (according to Order): Bill reported without Amendment; Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be Read 3ª on Monday next.

WORKING MEN'S DWELLINGS BILL [H.L.].

Read 3ª (according to Order); Amendments made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

House Adjourned at Five o'Clock, to Monday Next, a Quarter before Eleven o'Clock.

Earl of Kimberley.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 19th March 1897.

QUESTIONS.

PRISONS (PHYSICAL DRILL).

MR. E. H. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to a report that a system of physical drill has been tried in Darlinghurst Gaol, New South Wales, with marked beneficial results, it is stated, in creating a distaste for prison life; and whether, especially having regard to the fact that the late Prisons Committee recommended a similar system, he will request the Prisons Commissioners to make inquiry respecting the experiment at Darlinghurst?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY, Lancashire, Blackpool): I have not seen the report to which the hon. Member refers, but shall be glad, if he can let me have a copy, to consider the matter, and, if they seem necessary, to make further inquiries.

PRISONS (VISITING COMMITTEES).

MR. PICKERSGILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the reason of the delay in giving effect to the recommendation of the Departmental Committee on Prisons, that the duties and responsibilities of visiting committees should be confirmed and extended, in which recommendation the Commissioners expressed their concurrence during July 1895; and when the new Rules will be laid upon the Table?

SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: The reason of the delay is that I thought it desirable, before formally making the Rules, to give the Visiting Committees the opportunity of making any observations upon them they might wish. This took some time, but the Rules are now settled, and will be laid on the Table immediately.

TELEPHONE WIRE (LONDON).

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, what is the length of the private telephone wire recently erected by the Postal and Telegraph Department between 2, Cavendish Square and 1, Chesterfield Gardens, Curzon Street; what is the estimated actual cost of this wire; and whether a rental of £19 10s. is demanded, payable annually in advance for its use?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. R. W. Hanbury, Preston): The length of the private line in question is nearly a mile and a-half. The circuit is double, and there are, therefore, nearly three miles of wire. The charge for wires of this description is not based on the actual cost in each individual case, but on a uniform tariff. But I have no objection to state for the hon. Member's information that the estimated cost in this case was about £90. The rental is correctly stated by the hon. Member, and it is payable annually in advance. It includes the charge for two telephones and some additional apparatus.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON asked whether the Department charged 500 per cent. per annum on their outlay?

Mr. HANBURY said that the proportion between the outlay and the charge made had not been worked out, and, therefore, he could not answer the hon. Member's Question.

LAND TAX.

Colonel MILWARD (Warwick, Stratford-upon-Avon): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether the assessment lost by the section of the Land Tax Clauses of the Finance Act 1896 is being recovered by the Land Tax Commissioners by new assessments or increased assessments; (2) whether it is the fact that the redemption of land tax cannot possibly increase the amount payable in each parish by those who have not redeemed the tax; (3) whether his attention has been directed to the increase of the land tax in the parish of Birmingham, and to the following notice circulated by the local collector: "The increase in land tax is due to the provisions of the Finance Act 1896, which stipulates that the duty shall not be less than one penny in the pound on the gross value assessed for purposes of Income Tax (Schedule A);" and (4) whether the above statement is absolutely erroneous where no redemption is in course of progress?

*The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir Michael Hicks Beach, Bristol, W.): The answer to the first paragraph of my hon. Friend's Question is "No," and to the second paragraph "Yes." My attention has been directed to the case referred to in the third paragraph. I am afraid it is an instance of unwise action which has not been uncommon among those local authorities who are responsible for the assessment and collection of the land tax. The fact is that the land tax quota in Birmingham amounts to a very small fraction of a penny in the pound; and by the Act of last Session, in this and other similar cases, the tax was raised to a penny in the pound in order to provide for the automatic redemption of a tax which was exceedingly expensive to collect. The result will be that in a few years land tax will be extinguished in Birmingham.

OPHTHALMIA PATIENTS.

Dr. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the managers of the London Pauper Schools have for some years had the option of sending the children affected with ophthalmia to the Hanwell Ophthalmic Hospital, but have frequently not availed themselves of the opportunity; and, can he state why the Sutton Board kept a boy named Reid, affected with purulent ophthalmia, first for many months in the Herne Bay Convalescent Home, and later moved him into the Sutton School Infirmary, although Dr. Downes, the Medical Inspector of the Local Government Board, had expressly recommended the managers to remove the lad to the Hanwell Ophthalmic Hospital?

The SECRETARY to the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. T. W. Russell, Tyrone, S.): It is not the case that the Guardians generally in London have had the option of sending all the children affected with ophthalmia to the school referred to, as the accommodation has been inadequate for the reception of all children suffering from that disease.

With respect to the boy Reid, the Local Government Board are informed by the managers of the South Metropolitan School District, that on the 5th June 1894, they received a Report from the Medical Officer of the Herne Bay establishment, to the effect that William Reid was suffering from chronic ophthalmia, and might be benefited by treatment at Hanwell, and that the managers directed that the boy should be sent to Hanwell as soon as he could be received there. On the 22nd June 1894, a letter was sent to the clerk to the managers of the Central London School District, asking if there were vacancies in the school. On the 17th of the following month a further letter to the same effect was written, and on the 21st July the reply was that there were no vacancies. Under these circumstances the boy was transferred to the Brighton Road School at Sutton, and was treated for ophthalmia in the infirmary there.

MR. A. J. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside) said that he should like to ask whether the boy in question, who was suffering from this most dangerous complaint, was not allowed to mix with a number of other children?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said that, according to the statement he had received, the boy had been placed in the infirmary.

ROAD CONSTRUCTION (IRELAND).

MR. JOHN ROCHE (Galway, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he is aware that, at the Presentment Sessions held at Woodford for the Barony of Leitrim in November 1895, a road from Woodford to Derrygoolin was unanimously approved of at a cost of £1,000, being the Estimate of the Congested Districts Board Inspector, and also of the county surveyor, £500 to be given by Congested Districts Board, and £500 to be levied off the barony; (2) whether he is aware that, although the road would accommodate close on 100 families, the grand jury at assizes held last July, refused to sanction the road on the ground of expense, thereby depriving the district of the benefit of the road as well as of obtaining the grant of £500 offered by the Congested Districts Board; and (3) whether he will use his influence with the grand jury, with the object of having that

body approve of the road; and, if not, will he, as a member of the Congested Districts Board, have the estimated amount required advanced from the funds at the disposal of the said Board?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds Central): The facts are substantially as stated in the first and second paragraphs. With regard to the third paragraph, the approval or rejection of an undertaking of this kind rests entirely with the grand jury, over whom I have no means of exercising any control. The Congested Districts Board have already considered the question of advancing the entire estimated cost of the road, but have decided that they cannot contribute a larger grant than a sum of £500. The offer of the Board to the grand jury will remain open until the 31st December next.

DISTRESS (COUNTY MAYO).

MR. MICHAEL DAVITT (Mayo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether any Report has recently been made to him about the distressed condition of the various districts in and around Partry divisions of the Ballinrobe (County Mayo) Poor Law Union; (2) is he aware that the number of applications for outdoor relief are larger at present than when normal conditions prevail, and that the Poor Law valuation in these districts is exceptionally low, owing to the impoverished state of both land and people; (3) whether a request has been made by the Poor Law Guardians or others, supported by the recommendation of the Congested Districts Board, for a small grant of public money for the completion of the canal between the lake and Ballinrobe; and (4) whether, in view of the fact that but one mile of this canal remains to be built to complete the communication between the lake districts and the market town of Ballinrobe, and of all the circumstances of the case, he will favourably consider the advisability of recommending this grant for the carrying out of this badly-required work in this time of exceptional distress in the localities referred to?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: An inspection of the mountain districts of the Ballinrobe Union has recently been made by the Local Government Board's Inspector, but it is not anticipated that any distress will arise which cannot be dealt with under the existing poor law. During the past four weeks the numbers on outdoor relief in the Union have only increased by two, though these numbers show an increase of 35 as compared with the corresponding period of last year. The valuation of the districts in which Partry is situated is low, as stated, but the valuation of the Union generally is fairly good, being £2 2s. 11d. per head of the population—the total valuation of the Union amounting to £60,327. With regard to the second and third paragraphs, a proposal has been made for the expenditure of a sum of money out of public funds in aid of a project for completing the canal in question, and this proposal is now under consideration.

FACTORY ACT PROSECUTION.

*Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to a prosecution under the Factory Acts at the Bradford West Riding Court on the 11th inst., when a firm of manufacturers were summoned for allowing a girl to clean machinery in motion, she having been instructed to remove waste with pickers provided by the firm; is he aware that the magistrates held that the removal of waste by a picker was not cleaning machinery within the meaning of the Act; and that, on Her Majesty's Inspector asking for a case to be stated, the magistrates declined to state one; and, whether he proposes to take any further action in the matter?

Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: My attention has been called to this case. Whether or not the removal of waste under the circumstances stated is "cleaning" within the meaning of the Act, is a question open to some doubt. I am in consultation with the Chief Inspector on the matter, but I am unable at present to say whether or not further action will be taken.

NATIONAL TELEPHONE COMPANY.

Mr. A. S. T. GRIFFITH-BOSCAWEN (Kent, Tunbridge): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether his attention has been called to the fact that several prominent officials of the Post Office were present at a banquet given on 12th March by the National Telephone Company; whether similar occurrences have taken place on previous occasions; and whether Post Office officials are permitted to be present at entertainments given by a Company which holds a licence from the Post Office, and upon the efficiency of whose services the Post Office may from time to time be called upon to decide?

Mr. HANBURY: The facts are as stated by my hon. Friend, except that the banquet was not given by the Company, but by the staff. In taking the course alluded to the officials in question were following the usual practice of the Department. The question, however, of the desirability of Government officials attending on occasions of this kind is one undoubtedly requiring consideration. ["Hear, hear!"]

IRISH MAIL SERVICE.

Mr. JAMES DALY (Monaghan, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he has received resolutions from the Carrickmacross Board of Guardians, as well as other Boards of Guardians and Town Commissioners in Ireland, urging the dispatch of a train from Dundalk on arrival of the 7.20 mail for Castleblaney, Ballybay, Enniskillen, and Bundoran; and what steps, if any, have been taken to carry out the wishes of those who sent the resolutions referred to?

Mr. HANBURY: The Postmaster General has not received any resolutions from the Carrickmacross Board of Guardians on the subject referred to, but he has received resolutions from various other quarters. The mails for Castleblaney, Ballybay, and Enniskillen now reach Dundalk at 8.1 a.m., not at 7.20 a.m., and are sent forward by the 8.57 a.m. train. As stated in recent replies to other hon. Members, the question of improving the service will receive attention in connection with the revision of the Irish day mail services, and the Postmaster General will place before the railway company the representations which he has received, in the hope that the company may be able to effect the desired improvement, which the Post Office would not be justified in carrying out by putting on a special train at public cost. In any case it is feared that it will not be possible to extend the advantage to Bundoran, which is a long distance beyond Enniskillen.

BISHOPRIC OF ST. DAVID'S.

MR. BRYN ROBERTS (Carnarvonshire, Eifion): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, seeing that the Dean and Chapter of St. David's have deferred and delayed their election of a bishop of that see beyond the period permitted by Law, after receiving the usual licence from Her Majesty to proceed to an election, Her Majesty will be advised to nominate and present by Letters Patent, under the Act 25 Henry 8, c. 20, a person able and convenient for the bishopric, or what other course will be taken in view of the Chapter being in default?

SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: The election was fixed to take place on a date within the period named by the Act referred to, but the Dean having died before that date, it became impossible for the Chapter to proceed, and no default, therefore, has occurred entailing the consequence suggested in the Question.

MR. BRYN ROBERTS asked, was the right hon. Gentleman aware that no such officer as a Dean existed in St. David's until 1840?

SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: I am afraid I do not understand ecclesiastical law. I can, therefore, only give the hon. Gentleman the answer I have given him already—namely, that the election was made impossible by the death of the Dean before the date appointed.

SS. "OSBORN" (DISCHARGE OF CREW).

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesbrough): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been directed to the circumstances connected with the discharge at Calcutta of the crew of the steamship *Osborn*, owned by Messrs. Raeburn and Verrel, of Glasgow; whether he is aware that the said crew signed articles of agreement for twelve months, to terminate in a port in the United Kingdom or Continent at the end of that period, but that the articles expired at Calcutta; that the owners refused to pay the crew the cost of their passage home to the United Kingdom, and for their wages to continue until their arrival home; that, although the crew left the vessel on the 22nd December, 1896, they were not able to reach the United Kingdom until the 7th March, 1897; that the owners refused to pay the men any part of the wages due to them; and that, in consequence of the owners residing in Glasgow, the men have been compelled to obtain funds, and proceed to Glasgow to prosecute their claims; and whether, having regard to the serious inconvenience and loss to which all British seamen are subject under such circumstances, he will bring in a Bill to so amend the law as to permit seamen to make their claims for wages, passage money, or cost of maintenance in any port in the United Kingdom where they may arrive?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. C. T. RITCHIE, Croydon): My attention has been called to the case of the *Osborn* to which the hon. Member refers, and I have been in communication with the owners and with their representatives in London. I am informed that the owners do not admit the accuracy of the facts as stated in the Question; and, as the case will, I understand, form the subject of legal proceedings, it would not be right for me to make any statement with regard to it at the present moment. I may mention, however, that I am informed on behalf of the owners that they offered to consent to the case being disposed of in London.

SS. "BERGNON" (DEATH OF SEAMAN).

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1) whether the attention of the Foreign Office has been called to the death of a Newport seaman, named John Price, serving on the steamship *Bergnon* as steward, at Bilbao, on the 27th day of February 1897; (2) whether he is aware that the body was buried by the Spanish authorities in the corner of a field without burial service, although there is an English cemetery at Bilbao; and whether he can state the reasons, if any, why the Spanish authorities failed to notify Her Britannic Majesty's Consul at that port that the body of a British subject had been interred in such an irregular manner; and (3) whether he has received from Her Britannic Majesty's Consul at Bilbao any report with reference to this man's mysterious death; and, if not, will be cause inquiries to be instituted into the case?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. G. CURZON, Lancashire, Southport): There is no information at the Foreign Office in regard to the case of John Price. Her Majesty's Consul at Bilbao has, however, been instructed to furnish a report upon it, and his attention has been specially called to the points adverted to in the second paragraph of the hon. Member's question.

WRECK (SS. "CITY OF AGRA").

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been directed to the recent loss of the steamship *City of Agra* off Cape Vilano, and to the helpless condition of the Lascar seamen who formed part of the crew; whether he can state how many of these Lascar seamen were rated as able-bodied seamen, and whether the section of the Merchant Shipping Act, which provides that no seaman shall be entitled to the rating of A.B. unless he has previously had four years' sea service, is enforced on vessels carrying Lascar crews; whether, taking into consideration that Lascar seamen are unsuitable for cold latitudes, he is prepared to recommend that Lascar seamen should be employed only in warm latitudes; and whether any inquiry will be held into the cause of the loss of the steamship *City of Agra*?

MR. RITCHIE: Yes, Sir, the case of the *City of Agra* has been before me. The Board of Trade ordered an Inquiry into her loss on the 1st instant, and the Inquiry is now being held at Glasgow. As the case is, therefore, *sub judice* I do not think it advisable to make any statement with regard to it at the present time.

ARMY CONTRACTS (IRELAND).

MR. M. J. FLAVIN (Kerry, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether he can state if the officer connected with the Army contracts has yet visited Ireland with the view of making inquiries into the supply of meat, etc., to the troops; if so, whether he can give the officer's report.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): As I have already stated to the House, two officers of the War Department, one of them belonging to the Army Service Corps, have visited Ireland in reference to the question of the meat supply to the troops, and they are now pursuing their inquiries in other parts of the kingdom. They will furnish a Report concerning Ireland as soon as their information is complete, but it will be a Report to the Secretary of State, and, like other Departmental Reports, will not be made public. ["Hear, hear!"]

WICKLOW HARBOUR COMMISSIONERS.

MR. J. L. CAREW (Dublin, College Green): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury (1) with reference to the refusal of the Treasury to grant a loan to the Wicklow Harbour Commissioners except at 3½ per cent., equivalent to £4 5s. 3d. per cent., to cover repayment of principal and interest, whether he is aware that the local cesspayers are willing to guarantee 3⅛ per cent., equivalent to 4 per cent., to cover principal and interest; and (2) whether, having regard to the much easier terms on which the Treasury is willing to make advances to Foreign Governments and to the fact that Wicklow Harbour is, according to Naval experts, the only one between Waterford and Kingstown that can be used for Naval purposes, it will reconsider its refusal and make the concession asked for?

*MR. HANBURY: The answer to the first paragraph is in the affirmative, so far as the respective rates of interest are concerned. The rate offered by the Treasury is exceptionally low, and on that account would require special legislation, the statutory rate being 4 per cent. No advances to Foreign Governments are made out of the Local Loans Fund. I presume that the "Naval Experts'" opinion is contained in the letter to the Harbour Board from the captains of eight torpedo boats who used the harbour in 1895. The possible naval advantages of the harbour have been considered in proposing to introduce legislation allowing an exceptional rate of interest and wiping out the first loan entirely.

SUCK DRAINAGE AWARD.

Mr. D. KILBRIDE (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he can state what is the amount of the decrees and costs in the 159 outstanding cases not realised under the Suck Drainage Award; and whether he can state the number of decrees and costs under £5, over £5, and not exceeding £10, and above the latter?

Mr. HANBURY: The number of outstanding cases not realised is 152, not 159. One of these was over £2 but under £5, and its costs were 14s. 6d. The remaining 151 were all under £2, and their costs were 8s. 3d. each.

LOAN FUND SOCIETIES (IRELAND).

Dr. McDONNELL (Queen's County, Leix): I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether, since the publication of the last Report of the Loan Fund Board, Lord de Vesci has made any further offer in settlement of the very serious claim disclosed in the correspondence printed in that Report; in view of the fact that it appears from the correspondence that his father, the late Lord de Vesci, being, as trustee of the Abbeyleix Loan Fund, in possession of two sums of £887 18s. 11d. and £1,488, which had been duly appropriated for the charitable purposes of erecting labourers' cottages and a fever hospital, spent the money in erecting buildings on lands held from himself on yearly tenancy or on short leasehold; that, although his agent undertook that this land should be conveyed to trustees for the perpetual benefit of the poor, this undertaking was never carried out; and that the present Lord de Vesci claims to deal with the buildings as his own property; whether, if no settlement has been arrived at, Mr. Attorney General will proceed ex officio in the Chancery Division against the legal personal representative of the late Lord de Vesci?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. J. Atkinson, Londonderry, N.): Since the date of the Report referred to there has been some further correspondence between Lord de Vesci and the Loan Fund Board in reference to this matter. I have applied for but have not yet obtained a copy of this correspondence. If the hon. Member would kindly postpone his Question till Tuesday next I hope to be then able to answer it.

RENT DECREES (IRELAND).

Mr. DALY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state to the House the number of decrees for rent granted at the October Quarter Sessions 1896, and the January Quarter Sessions 1897, also for the corresponding dates 1895-6?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: If the hon. Member will indicate the name of the Quarter Sessions in respect of which he desires to have the information referred to, I will cause the necessary inquiries to be made.

QUEENSTOWN CUSTOM HOUSE.

Captain DONELAN (Cork, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether any tender has yet been accepted for the construction of the new custom house at Queenstown?

Mr. HANBURY: Owing to the unsettled condition of the local labour market, no tender could be obtained last July from any local contractor, and only one was obtained from a distance, and that at about double the estimate. In September tenders were again invited, and after some negotiation the lowest tender, that of a local man, has now been sufficiently modified to justify its acceptance, and I have arranged with the Board of Works accordingly. Though some alteration has been made in the plans, it will entail a considerable excess over the original estimate.

DOGS DESTROYED (IRELAND).

Mr. D. MACALEESE (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) if the police have made any investigation into the circumstances regarding the alleged malicious poisoning of several valuable dogs belonging to farmers in the townland of Tyholland, County Monaghan; and, if so, with what result; (2) is he aware that a claim for damages was made by the owners of these dogs, and rejected by the Grand Jury at the late Monaghan Assizes on the ground that no claim for damages can lie in the case of a dog maliciously poisoned; and that a gentleman named White, at a recent Assizes at Monaghan, was awarded £25 by the Grand Jury to compensate him for the loss of a valuable dog maliciously destroyed by some person unknown; and (3) whether he can give any explanation as to the difference between the awards in these two cases?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The police investigated the circumstances attending the poisoning of the dogs referred to in the first paragraph, but were unable to connect any person with the occurrence. The dogs were three in number, and, in the opinion of the police, were not worth more than half-a-crown apiece. The owners, however, placed a higher value on the animals and claimed the sum of £44 10s. as compensation at Presentment Sessions, which claim was rejected. The claim was renewed at the recent Assizes and was rejected by the direction of the presiding Judge on the ground that the Statute under which the claim was made did not sanction the grant of compensation for dogs. It appears to be the fact that at an Assizes held in 1883 compensation amounting to £20 was awarded for the malicious poisoning of two valuable dogs, but since that date it has been decided by the Court for Crown Cases Reserved that there is no power to give compensation for injury to or destruction of a dog.

CAPTAIN DONELAN asked whether it was part of the duty of the Royal Irish Constabulary to assign the value of farmers' dogs?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I could not say, Sir; but it does not seem to me to be very relevant, because there can be no compensation in any case.

MR. EDWARD CARSON (Dublin University): Was not the claim made on the ground that the dogs were foreign animals? [*Laughter.*]

[No reply was given.]

LIGHT DUES (FOREIGN STATES AND BRITISH COLONIES).

SIR GEORGE BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can present a Return of the names of foreign States and British colonies which defray the costs of the public lighting of their coasts from light dues levied on shipping?

MR. RITCHIE: In the Report of a Departmental Committee of 1888 it was stated that down to 1885 the only maritime States in which tonnage dues were not levied were Chili and the Netherlands. It is true that in some cases dues were not levied under the name of light dues, but, under whatever name they were levied, they were applied, amongst other services, to the maintenance of lights or works for the improvement of harbours and navigation. The statement, therefore, so often made, that the United Kingdom and Turkey were the only two maritime States that charge dues for the maintenance of lights, etc., is not correct.

SIR GEORGE BADEN-POWELL asked could the right hon. Gentleman grant a Return?

MR. RITCHIE replied that he had not got full particulars which would enable him to give a Return, but when he informed the hon. Gentleman that the only maritime States in which tonnage dues were not charged were Chili and the Netherlands he thought he would hardly think a Return necessary.

SIR GEORGE BADEN-POWELL: Light dues?

MR. RITCHIE: Yes. I have told him they are called tonnage dues, but in most cases they are for the purpose of lighting the coast.

SIR GEORGE BADEN-POWELL: And for other purposes?

MR. RITCHIE: Yes.

JAMESON RAID (TRANSVAAL).

SIR ELLIS ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies (1) whether Her Majesty's Government have yet received the details of the compensation demanded by the Transvaal Government for the Raid; and (2) whether any, and, if so, what, reply has been made by Her Majesty's Government to the Boer demand?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): Since the hon. Gentleman put the Question on the Paper—in fact, this morning—I have seen a dispatch from Her Majesty's agent in the Transvaal containing particulars of the demand on the part of the Transvaal Government. I have already promised to lay it upon the Table as soon as it arrives, and I propose to do so immediately. In answer to the second Question, my hon. Friend will see that it is premature in any case to ask whether a reply has been sent to a demand which has only arrived to-day. But I must also point out to him that that demand will have to be forwarded for consideration and remarks to the Chartered Company; further, that it will have to be subjected to legal investigation and will have to be considered by myself and Her Majesty's Government, and it will then be the subject of communications, which may be prolonged, with the Transvaal Government. [*Laughter.*] Under the circumstances I must deprecate any further questions upon the subject, because until that process has been gone through and exhausted it will be quite impossible for me to give any information. ["Hear, hear!"]

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will not think it an excessive demand if I ask him whether he can tell us if the demand of the Transvaal Government is for £1,600,000 or for £1,000,000?

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I have already answered that question. It is for £1,677,000, odd shillings and pence. [*Laughter.*]

LAND SUB-COMMISSION (OMAGH).

Mr. G. MURNAGHAN (Tyrone, Mid): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the decisions arived at by the members of No. 4 Land Sub-Commission, which sat in Omagh on or about 15th October, 1896, have not yet been published; and whether, inasmuch as five months' delay in announcing decisions is unusual and causes much anxiety to parties interested, he will state when the decisions may be expected?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: Judgment has been given in the cases referred to in the Question, and the parties have been duly notified of the result.

Mr. CARSON asked what was the reason of the great delay in giving judgment in these cases?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: I have no information on that point. If my right hon. Friend will put a Question on the Paper I will endeavour to get the information for him.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING (POLL).

Mr. H. C. F. LUTTRELL (Devon, Tavistock): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether in the case of five electors at a parish council meeting demanding a poll one or more of such five should withdraw from association with the others during the specified time, this would render the demand inoperative?

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: The Local Government Board have stated, when their opinion has been requested on this subject, that they have no jurisdiction to determine the question, but they have at the same time said that they are not prepared to advise that the chairman of a parish meeting should consider the demand as withdrawn unless the withdrawal is by all those who made the demand.

PUBLIC WORKS (WEST COAST OF SCOTLAND).

Mr. T. C. H. HEDDERWICK (Wick Burghs): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury when the Government propose to institute or establish any public works on the west coast of Scotland?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): Perhaps the hon. Gentleman is unaware that there have been public works instituted on the west coast of Scotland since 1891, and there is a Vote in the Estimates for the coming year for works in that part of the United Kingdom.

SUPPLY (IRISH LAND COMMISSION).

Mr. CARSON: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the existing discontent with the administration of the Irish Land Laws, he will put down the Vote for the Irish Land Commission at the earliest convenient date?

Mr. J. C. FLYNN (Cork, N.) would ask the right hon. Gentleman, before he answered that Question, to say whether the discontent was not felt more particularly by the tenantry of Ireland, and especially in Ulster?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: As far as my observation goes the discontent in respect of the Land Laws in Ireland has been universal with all classes of the community—["hear, hear!"]—and my private conviction is that so long as you continue to fix rents by a public tribunal there always will be discontent. ["Hear, hear!"] In answer to the Question of my right hon. and learned Friend I have to say that, of course, it is my desire to consult the wishes of representatives of Ireland as to the dates on which the Irish Estimates shall come on and the order in which they shall be taken. I do not know that I can fix a date at present, but I will certainly consult my right hon. and learned Friend and others, with a view to meeting the general wishes of Gentlemen from Ireland, to whatever Party they belong.

CRETE.

Mr. JOHN DILLON (Mayo, E.): I wish to ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs a Question of which I have not given him notice—namely, whether he can give the House any information as to the alleged sinking of a Greek vessel by an Austrian cruiser off the coast of Crete, and how that occurred, in view of the fact that the blockade does not commence until Sunday?

Mr. CURZON: I really do not think that the hon. Gentleman ought to ask me this Question without any notice at all. I must ask him to be good enough to give me notice. ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. DILLON: I will put it on the Paper for Monday.

An hon. Member: The blockade will be on then.

SITTING OF THE HOUSE (EXEMPTION FROM STANDING ORDER).

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY moved, "That the Business of Supply, if under discussion at Twelve o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order Sittings of the House."

The House divided:—Ayes, 164; Noes, 56.—(Division List, No. 137.)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY.

Considered in Committee.

[The Chairman of Ways and Means, Mr. J. W. Lowther, in the Chair.]

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1897-8.

1. Motion made, and Question proposed:—

> "That a sum, not exceeding £4,696,000, be granted to Her Majesty to defray the expenses of wages, etc., to officers, seamen, and boys, coastguards, and Royal Marines, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1898."

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee) said it would be in the recollection of the Committee that when the Vote was last before the House the First Lord of the Admiralty refrained from dealing with many questions that had been raised respecting the *personnel* of the Navy. To one question he wished to recur. He alluded to the demand made for the telegraphic instructions sent by the Admiralty to the Admirals in Cretan waters, and to the reasons given by the First Lord of the Treasury for refusing to produce those Instructions.

*The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS said the matter did not arise on this Vote.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON said he was not going to discuss it. He proposed to refer to it because they were dealing with the salaries of the Admirals, and he thought it would be relevant to ask for the Instructions given to the Admirals in Cretan waters.

*The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS said the Admirals simply carried out the instructions of the Admiralty, and the Admiralty were responsible for the issue of instructions, and, therefore, any criticisms—[Mr. Robertson: "No," *and cheers*]—must be made upon the salary of the First Lord of the Admiralty, by whom the instructions were issued.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON said that when he said "No," he did not mean to contradict the Chairman, but merely to suggest that he had not perhaps correctly apprehended his point. He did not propose to criticise the instructions to the Admirals, but merely to protest against the alleged rule of the Service that the instructions to the Admirals on active service could not be disclosed.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: That would not arise upon this Vote, for obviously the Admirals who carry out the instructions are not responsible.

MR. E. ROBERTSON said that he would postpone what he had to say until the Admiralty Vote was reached. There was only one other question to which he would refer—that of the conduct of one of the Admirals; and he deprecated any attempt to make the officers or men of the Navy responsible for the policy they were carrying out, either by insinuation, accusation, or defence. Therefore, it was only right anything tending to impute conduct not in accordance with the regulations of the Admiralty to any one of its officers should be brought to the notice of the Admiralty, and that they should have an opportunity of making such explanations as were possible. He wished to refer to a telegram in *The Times* of March 11, purporting to be from its correspondent in Canea, and the substance of which was this. He said:

> "I have seen Admiral Harris, who has made a statement to me regarding an official visit paid by him to certain persons described as insurgent chiefs."

The Admiral told how the insurgent chiefs received what were called the autonomy proposals, and the Chiefs told him they never received the Proclamation of the Powers forbidding them to attack the towns, and never heard of the orders issued by the Admiralty to send doctors after the bombardment. The Admiral concluded by saying that these two Notes had been by him intrusted to the Greek Admiral, and his conclusion was that the Greek Admiral had failed to notify these facts to the insurgent Chiefs. The point to which he desired chiefly to call attention was this. The telegram concluded as follows:—"The Admiral particularly said that he wished this to be communicated to *The Times*." He wished to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether, if this telegram were true, the conduct imputed to the Admiral was consistent with the regulations of the Admiralty, and in particular with Regulation 682, which was made by the Admiralty for the conduct of all persons in the Fleet, from the highest to the lowest:—

> "All persons belonging to the Fleet are forbidden to write for any newspaper on subjects connected with the Naval Service, or to publish, or cause to be published, directly or indirectly, in a newspaper or other periodical, any matter or thing relating to the public service."

He believed this to be an operative regulation at the present moment. He submitted that if the statement in *The Times* were true, the action of the Admiral in sending a message to a newspaper in this country, through its correspondent, was inconsistent with that regulation, the wholesome character of which the House would admit. He asked whether the attention of the First Lord of the Admiralty had been called to this, and whether he had made any inquiry regarding it?

MR. JOHN DILLON (Mayo, E.) said the message must have been sent on the Admiral's personal responsibility. Some time ago he complained of the fact—which he believed to be a fact, judging by the accounts of eye-witnesses—that during the recent bombardment shells were dropped into the garden of a convent and some women were killed. He brought the matter before the House at the time, but the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, from the lofty eminence on which he posed, treated with supreme and absolute contempt all information given by newspaper correspondents, but unfortunate individuals who had not access to the telegrams received by the Foreign Office, except such as the Under Secretary read to them, must base some reliance on newspaper correspondents, especially when the correspondents of different newspapers concurred. When the correspondents of such newspapers as *The Times*, *Standard*, *Daily News* and *Daily Chronicle* substantially agreed in their statements, they could not expect the ordinary Members of that House to treat such statements with absolute contempt. Had the Admiral or the Foreign Office inquired whether it was a fact that without notice a number of shells were fired from a British vessel into the garden of a convent, and whether any women in that convent were injured or killed? He thought they were entitled to ask whether Admiral Harris did take what would be considered by the Admiralty to be satisfactory steps to assure himself that those upon whom he opened fire had adequate warning. He did not think that a message sent to the Greek Commander was sufficient notice.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall) hoped the First Lord of the Admiralty would not accept the version given by the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down as representing the real facts. He very adroitly sailed near the wind, and did not state that the correspondents of *The Times*, *Standard*, *Daily News* and *Daily Chronicle* had asserted this fact.

MR. DILLON said he relied on *The Times* chiefly.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT asked if the hon. Gentleman said that there was a unanimity of opinion among these correspondents?

MR. DILLON said he took the statement from *The Times*, and he believed the *Standard* and *Daily News* bore out the statement.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT said that no correspondent, as a matter of fact, could have been on the spot at the time, and the statement must therefore have rested very much on hearsay. ["Hear, hear!"] There was no such consensus of opinion as to the bombardment of this convent as was supposed. He believed this convent was a very strong building, and was occupied by the insurgents for defensive purposes. He understood that one woman was wounded. An attempt had been made to represent our Admiral as not having taken sufficient pains to inform the insurgents of his proposed bombardment. It must be recollected that all the Admirals had been in constant and friendly intercourse with the Greek Commander. The Greek Commander was in communication with the insurgents, and it was exceedingly natural that the British Admiral should communicate with the insurgents, who were of a wild and ferocious character, through the Greek Commander. They heard from all the correspondents that there was a most deplorable lack of interpreters. Much of the mischief that had happened was caused through this, and he trusted the Government would see that the difficulty was removed as soon as possible.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne) thought the hon. Gentleman opposite had put a strained interpretation on the regulation which he had referred to. This was not a question of disclosing information about the public service. He took it that our Admiral spoke on behalf of the other Admirals associated with him, and probably he sent this information, by their desire, to correct the statements which had been sent not only to this country but to Europe. The hon. Gentleman, he was sure, would admit that *The Times* was the foremost journal in the world for conveying public information, not only to this, but to any other part of the world. He should have thought *The Times* would be received as the first organ of public opinion in all parts of the world, and, therefore, he thought the Admiral, instead of being blamed, was to be commended for his action. If the hon. Gentleman went so far as to say that when local correspondents were attached to fleets they were not to get information, that raised the whole question of the system by which special correspondents were so attached. It was public opinion that required this source of information. The Army as well as the Navy would no doubt be happy enough to do without correspondents, but as long as correspondents were approaching an Admiral in command of a squadron for information, he would be more than human if he did not endeavour to correct some false information, which all the Admirals must have felt very keenly.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): I think the hon. and gallant Member has stated the case of Admiral Harris extremely well. I do not think Admiral Harris has done anything whatever against the spirit of the regulation to which the hon. and learned Gentleman referred. This is not information containing secrets of the service, and there is nothing in his action which at all contravenes that question of discipline which, I believe, is at the bottom of the regulation. If the Admiral were to be censured for sending this particular telegram, the whole question of furnishing information to war correspondents would have to be reconsidered. I am sure some hon. Members on the opposite side of the House will feel that it must have been extremely galling for the Admirals to have seen all the strictures cast upon them without being able to say one single word in their defence. [*Cheers.*] Accordingly, I should certainly not feel it my duty in any way to reprove Admiral Harris for the action which he took. [*Cheers.*] The hon. Member for East Mayo asks me what were the facts of the case referred to by him, and he again asserts that it was a convent that was fired upon.

MR. DILLON said he did not know the facts; he had only said what was reported in the chief newspapers.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: I do not know whether the hon. Member is aware that the place fired at by the Admirals was the headquarters of the insurgents. If, therefore, they fired at a convent it was because the insurgents had established themselves in a convent, and had raised their flag at that point. The British Admiral states that it was a homestead with stone walls round it. It was a strong place, and it was there that the insurgents flew their flag. With regard to the question of notice, it seems to me to have been as proper a precaution as could possibly be taken by the Admiral to communicate with the Greek Commodore, and for him to communicate with the insurgents. ["Hear, hear!"] The hon. Member knows the Admirals state that these notices were given, and I do really not see why the word of the Admirals in this respect should not be taken against any anonymous evidence. ["Hear, hear!"] The important question of interpreters has been raised. No doubt it would have been better if the ships had had a proper supply of interpreters, but hon. Members will, I think, see that there would be some difficulty in providing interpreters. A famous case was lately before the House in which the question of an impartial interpreter played a considerable part. It may have been that any Greeks or Turks taken as interpreters would be likely to be open to suspicion, and of course that is a very important point. It is very desirable that all ships of war should be furnished, as far as possible, with men capable of speaking various languages; it is a matter which has occupied my attention, and I am not surprised that attention should have been called to it. [*Cheers.*]

MR. HENRY LABOUCHERE (Northampton) said he was surprised that the First Lord of the Admiralty should say that Admiral Harris had acted in accordance with the spirit of the regulations.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: What I said was that he had not acted contrary to the spirit of the regulations.

MR. LABOUCHERE replied that if Admiral Harris had not acted contrary to the spirit of the regulations, he must have acted in accordance with it. ["Hear, hear!"] It came to the same thing. The Question was whether or not the Greek Commodore had communicated certain facts as to whether the International Fleet would fire on the insurgents or not. Admiral Harris appeared to have considered that the Greek Commodore had not communicated with the insurgents; and he then calmly made an accusation of bad faith against the Commodore. But the Admiral did not write home to his own Government on the subject, and thus enable the Greek Commodore to reply; but he sent for the correspondent of *The Times* newspaper, and put into his hands this accusation against the Commodore, and asked him to send it to his newspaper. Nothing more objectionable, unfair, or contrary to the spirit and the letter of the Admiralty regulations could be conceived. [*Cheers.*] It now appeared that Admiral Harris in making this accusation against the Greek Commodore was absolutely wrong, and that the Greek Commodore did, as a matter of fact, communicate with the insurgents. Therefore it was obviously a case in which the Admiral, who had violated the regulations, ought to be blamed. Then as to the point in regard to the firing, the complaint was not that the Admiral had fired on a convent, but that he had fired at all. He did not say that Admiral Harris should be turned out of the Service, but he thought the First Lord of the Admiralty should inform the Admiral that when he had an accusation to make against a fellow Admiral, he would do well to forward the accusation home to his Government, instead of sending for *The Times* Correspondent and, without communicating with the Greek Commodore, have the accusation published to the world at large.

Captain BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) said he did not think the hon. Member for Northampton was correct in stating that Admiral Harris had accused the Greek Commodore of not having transmitted the message to the insurgents. All that Admiral Harris had said was that certain chiefs who had been interviewed stated they had not got the message. He did not suppose that Admiral Harris had any intention of accusing the Greek Commodore of having betrayed the trust reposed in him, and whether the Admiral was technically right in having communicated with the correspondent of *The Times* he did not profess to say, but he joined his hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Eastbourne in defending the Admiral for the action he had taken, considering the provocation he had received. [*Cheers.*]

Mr. J. H. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy Burghs) said there were two points in dispute. The first was—did Admiral Harris violate the Admiralty regulations in communicating with the newspaper correspondents; and, secondly were sufficient precautions taken before the order to fire on the insurgents was issued? In regard to the first point, this was not a case of the Admiral having offered or sent fresh information to a particular newspaper—for the explanation appeared in all the London daily papers the same morning; but it was a case of the Admiral taking the quickest possible way of making his position and the position of his brother Admirals clear to the world in regard to a certain false report which had been circulated against them—[*Ministerial cheers*]—and, taking that view of the matter, he should be very sorry if the result of the Debate should be to make it more difficult for newspaper correspondents to obtain information from naval and military sources during the grave crisis through which Europe was now passing. ["Hear, hear!"] In regard to the second point, he was not convinced that Admiral Harris had taken the necessary precautions before the order to fire was given. Admiral Harris admitted that he was now convinced that the insurgents had not received the message sent to them by the combined Fleet, and before giving the order to fire he ought to have satisfied himself that those on whom he was about to open fire were aware of what was required of them.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON said he did not make any accusation against Admiral Harris. All he desired was information. He had hoped that the First Lord of the Admiralty would have been able to say that the telegram was incorrect. But it now appeared that the telegram was correct, and that the Admiral had sent the message to *The Times*.

The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY: I am sorry if I conveyed that impression. I am absolutely ignorant about this telegram to *The Times*, and whether the communication was made or not.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON said that was the whole point. His complaint was not that *The Times* or any other newspaper should have obtained its information in this way, but that Admiral Harris should have expressed the wish, as the telegram said, that this information should be sent to *The Times*. Such action appeared to him to be entirely inconsistent with the regulations; and he therefore sincerely hoped that there was some mistake, and that no such message had been sent by Admiral Harris. But there was one thing the House should take a note of, and that was the way in which the First Lord of the Admiralty appeared to be inclined to fritter away the most prominent, wholesome, and universal of the regulations of the Service. [*Ministerial cries of* "No, no!" *and Opposition cheers.*] If the plain words of the Admiralty regulations forbidding any person in the Fleet to publish or cause to be published, directly or indirectly, any matter relating to the public service, were to be treated in this way, it would be bad for the Service and bad for the House. ["Hear, hear!"] The First Lord of the Admiralty had said that Admiral Harris had acted under extreme provocation. Surely that was no excuse for any officer for violating—as he believed, or as he hoped, Admiral Harris did not violate—the perfectly clear regulations of the Service. The consideration that newspaper correspondents would not find their enterprise as easy as they did now was not one which ought to weigh with the Admiralty or the House. The regulation was clear and specific, and he, for one, would not believe, without further information, that Admiral Harris did communicate this message, in the way described in the telegram, to a newspaper correspondent.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said that hon. Gentlemen opposite seemed to have misapprehended one fact. Commodore Reineck declared that he did deliver the message to the insurgents; but Admiral Harris's assertion was that he gave two notes to the Greek Commodore which were not delivered to the insurgents. As to Admiral Harris's communication to a newspaper correspondent, there was a broad distinction to be drawn between the use which Admiral Harris made of the correspondent—for he must assume that the telegram to *The Times* was true —and the suborning of a correspondent to write up a particular officer and particular views. The former act was in the public interest; the latter, though it was often done by naval officers, was most obnoxious. ["Hear, hear!"] A certain discretion should be allowed to an Admiral as to the manner of communicating news to the public. As to the Admiralty regulation against any officer writing or publishing any matter connected with the public service, that regulation was carried out in a most partial and mischievous manner. ["Hear, hear!"] It was notoriously not always enforced. Officers were every day writing to the newspapers; and officers and officials of the Admiralty as well were constantly writing to the Press anonymously to write up particular projects. On the other hand, the Admiralty would sometimes forbid an officer to publish articles of the utmost public importance. He had called attention to the case of a naval officer who was forbidden to read a paper before the Royal United Service Institution on the strategic interests of England in the Mediterranean. If the regulations were to be enforced against the smaller people, officials and officers should be forbidden to write to the papers anonymously. ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. DILLON said that he did not complain of the statement of Admiral Harris. But when a question was asked as to this bombardment—an event which shocked the public opinion of the country—it was stated that Admiral Harris had given ample warning to the insurgents. That information remained unchallenged for a fortnight, until there appeared in *The Times* this telegram—as to the authenticity of which he had no doubt—stating that the Admirals had learnt in an interview with the insurgent chiefs that their warning had never been received by the latter. Before Admiral Harris fired on the insurgents he ought to have satisfied himself personally, without the intermediary of the Greek Commodore, that the insurgents were warned. Commodore Reineck was not acting with the allies, and had been treated by them with every sign of hostility and want of confidence. ["Hear, hear!"] But, on his own statement, Admiral Harris did not satisfy himself, but trusted to the action of the Greek Commodore. [*Cheers.*] It was his business to satisfy himself. [*Cries of* "Oh," *and* "How?"] By the same means that he afterwards took to communicate with the insurgents. [*Cheers.*] He might have met the insurgent chiefs on the shore before the bombardment just as well as after. Admiral Harris made a communication to *The Times*' Correspondent at Canea shifting all the blame on to the Greek Commodore, who by this time had gone back to Athens. Commodore Reineck then called on *The Times*' Correspondent in Athens, and submitted to that Gentleman the documents on which he founded his contradiction of the Admiral's statement, and the Correspondent telegraphed to *The Times* that he had examined the documents and was satisfied that Commodore Reineck had done his best to warn the insurgents. The facts were these. The Greek Commodore sent on to the insurgents the Admiral's warning. The insurgents sent back a remonstrance stating that they were only on the defensive, and that the Bashi-Bazouks were the aggressors; but this did not reach the Admirals in time to stop the bombardment, and accordingly the insurgents were fired on while they were under the impression that they were still in negotiation with the Admirals. Because the British Admiral was in such a hurry, and sent his message in such a roundabout way, he opened fire on men who had no reasonable ground to expect the attack. ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet) said that he had never listened to a more extraordinary line of argument. [*Cheers.*] How was Admiral Harris to satisfy himself personally that the insurgents had received his warning?

Mr. DILLON: By sending one of his own officers. [*Cheers.*]

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER said that in that case the hon. Member would have at once asked whether the officer understood Greek. [*Cheers.*] The Admiral gave two written notes to the Greek Commodore.

Mr. DILLON: Why did he not send the British Consul? [*Cheers.*]

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER said that Sir A. Biliotti had performed, at great personal risk, an act of the greatest gallantry, for which he had been sneered at by the hon. Gentleman. [*Cheers.*] Sir A. Biliotti's time was fully and nobly occupied, and it was most unreasonable to expect him to be employed in delivering these notes. But Admiral Harris did commit one slight indiscretion. He ignored what he should have known on high authority—that the Cretan chiefs might not always be persons whose word could be closely relied on. [*Cheers, cries of* "Oh," *and an* HON. MEMBER, "The devil quoting Scripture," *followed by laughter.*] Mr. James Lowther went on to say that there was one thing which had come out clearly in the Debate. As the First Lord had told them, the "women and children" argument, which raiders were very fond of, was untrue in this case, as it was in another with which the House was familiar. [*Irish cheers.*] It was plain that word was conveyed to the insurgents, and, under these circumstances, the House might be perfectly well satisfied that the British Admiral had faithfully discharged his duty.

Mr. J. C. FLYNN (Cork, N.) thought Admiral Harris might very well exclaim, in Shakespearian phrase, "Save me from my friends." The right hon. Gentleman had not followed the sequence of events at all. There was no desire on that side of the House to be severe, let alone unjust, to Admiral Harris, but they were determined to probe to the bottom a matter which concerned the lives of Christians who were struggling to free themselves from abominable tyranny. Of course Admiral Harris would naturally be indignant that a false construction should be put upon his conduct; but were they to have no regard for the feelings of the Greek Commodore and the Cretans because they were Greeks? Commodore Reineck, in the most categorical and clear manner, to the satisfaction of *The Times'* Correspondent, and not by verbal expressions but by the strength of documents sent by the insurgent chiefs, had proved first of all that he had conveyed the message of Admiral Harris and the other Admirals. [*Cries of* "No!"] He conveyed, at all events, the warning.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: What he did not do was to convey the Notes. He might have conveyed his own view, which might have been a very different view from that of the Notes.

Mr. FLYNN retorted that if the Commodore conveyed the substance of the communications no one could say that he had not conveyed the warning. They were entitled to assume that he knew the contents. These unfortunate insurgents were entitled to be heard just as much as the Turks were. He believed Commodore Reineck had been most unfairly treated, but it was most desirable that the facts should come out, and if the statements which had been referred to were made by the insurgent chiefs, and were conveyed by the Greek Commodore to the Admirals of the allied Fleet, it was their duty to have satisfied themselves whether those statements were true or untrue.

Mr. T. W. LEGH (Lancashire, Newton) pointed out that the hon. Member for East Mayo had cast a greater aspersion upon Commodore Reineck than Admiral Harris or anyone else. The hon. Member asked, Why did not Admiral Harris take steps to ascertain whether the message was delivered? For his own part he had been under the impression that if a brother officer and colleague and gentleman undertook to deliver a message, it would be delivered. ["Hear, hear!"] Evidently the hon. Member was under a different impression, and was of opinion that the British Admiral ought to have taken steps beforehand to ascertain that his Greek colleague would do what he had promised.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland) thought it unfortunate that hon. Gentlemen opposite, in discussing this matter, should find it necessary to cast strong imputations upon everything connected with the Greek people and the Greek race. ["No!"] The Member for Sheffield had suggested as clearly as anybody could, without saying it directly, that Commodore Reineck had been guilty of mendacity, and the right hon. Member for Thanet had cast reflections on the character of the whole Greek people. [HON. MEMBERS: "No; Cretans."] Were not the Cretans Greeks? Did they not speak the Greek language?

Lord HUGH CECIL: Does not the hon. Member speak the English language? [*Laughter.*]

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR was glad to take as a compliment the suggestion that he, an Irishman, was able to speak the English language. Undoubtedly the Cretans were of Greek race. The complaint he had to make of the First Lord of the Admiralty was this. The correspondent of *The Times* in Athens, having been shown all the documents in the business, had expressed his strong conviction that Commodore Reineck had vindicated his own good faith. In face of that, would it not have been a courteous and almost necessary act on the part of the right hon. Gentleman representing the Admiralty to have also stated that in his opinion Commodore Reineck had vindicated himself and his nation from what, after all, was a very serious, and, if true, a very foul charge? Some complaint had been made of the action of the Admiral in communicating with *The Times*' correspondent. His hon. Friend the Member for Kirkcaldy, who was a journalist, had naturally great sympathy for anything which extended the facilities of journalists. So had he. He did not blame the special correspondent for getting information either from the naval or the military commander. That was his business; if he did not do so, he would have rather a rainy day when he came back to his newspaper. With regard to Admiral Harris, no doubt he was smarting under what was a serious charge, and felt bound to vindicate himself. He did not blame him for that. Were there not other channels and organs by which commanding officers could indicate the character of their defence except the newspapers of the country? There was, for example, the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Foreign Office. If Admiral Harris felt aggrieved his business was not to go to a newspaper correspondent, but to telegraph to the First Lord of the Admiralty and then to let the right hon. Gentleman make the statement. He thought that Admiral Harris had gone against the spirit of the orders under which he acted. His communication was to a large extent an intervention in what at the moment was a very fierce political question—namely, the responsibility of this country and the responsibility of the Greeks. That was a question in which naval and military officers should mix as little as possible, and Admiral Harris had adopted the wrong way of defending himself.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT said that as so much depended on the wording of this telegram, he asked permission to read it. The hon. Member for Northampton repeatedly said that Admiral Harris sent for *The Times* Correspondent. That was not borne out by the telegram, which said:—

> "I have seen Rear-Admiral Harris at Suda. He says that, having been assured that the combat yesterday was provoked by the Bashi-Bazouks, he wished to confer with the insurgents. With the French and Italian Admirals he landed at Akrotiri this afternoon, saw six of the chiefs, and discussed the autonomy proposal, which was favourably received. In the course of the discussion he unexpectedly elicited the fact that the chiefs never received the proclamation of the Powers forbidding them to attack the towns, and never heard of the Admiral's offer to send doctors after the bombardment. Both these Notes were intrusted to the Greek Commodore Reineck, the Admiral trusting to his brother naval officer to communicate them to the insurgents. The Admirals were all convinced that the Akrotiri insurgents were not communicated with on these occasions. Doctors are to go to Akrotiri to-morrow. The Admiral particularly said that he wished this to be communicated to *The Times.*"

A more extraordinary and monstrous idea of the duties of commanding officers than that apparently held by the hon. Member for East Mayo it would be impossible to imagine. According to the hon. Member the commanding officer had personally to satisfy himself—["No, no"]—that the insurgents had full notice. These insurgents had previously fired on the officers who had tried to communicate with them, and to suppose that the Admiral should land and go up two or three miles from the town to a high position in order to communicate with wild insurgents was ridiculous. It was equally absurd to say that he should send his flag-lieutenant or one of his officers when he had one of the most natural means of communication at his hand in the person of the Greek Commodore, whom he knew well and whom he naturally trusted. Hon. Gentlemen were placed in a most ridiculous dilemma, because if the insurgents were communicated with, as they said, then the whole charge against Admiral Harris fell to the ground. If they were not communicated with, the responsibility clearly rested on the Greek Commodore, who undertook the duty of communicating with them. A very unjust attack had been made on Admiral Harris on this occasion, as on previous occasions; and when hon. Gentlemen found fault with the Admiral for communicating the information to a newspaper correspondent who visited him, let them remember the attacks they made night after night, not on the Government, but on the Admiral, for bombarding the Akrotiri heights. ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. T. LOUGH (Islington, W.) moved to reduce the Vote by £279,545, in order to call attention to the great increase in this Vote as compared with past years. Ten years ago the amount of this Vote was £3,000,000, and it had gradually grown by £300,000 a year until the present amount of 4¾ millions had been reached. The £3,000,000 in 1888-89 provided for 62,000 men, while the amount asked for last year provided for 93,000 men; therefore in the ten years there was an increase of 60 per cent. in the amount of the money and 50 per cent. in the number of the men. Those were very grave figures. For the last ten years we had been steadily strengthening the Navy, and he thought they might at least stop for a few years instead of going forward at the rapid pace shown in this Vote. The Vote this year was the largest increase that had taken place in any year except 1893-94, and it was the amount of one particular Vote that ought to arrest the attention of the Committee. A very grave policy was involved in this, because the increase in money and men had not been defended. He had paid the greatest attention to the two former Debates, and beyond the information given in the Paper which had been distributed, the Committee was furnished with no reason why this Vote should be enlarged. In the Paper it was shown that the officers, seamen, and engine room artificers were to be increased, and that there should be 2,000 stokers added to the Navy. That seemed to him to be an extraordinary proposal. Some interesting figures had been quoted by the hon. Member for King's Lynn, and he thought that we could very easily provide for the necessities in reference to the number of stokers that might be required without having this burden thrown permanently on the country.

*The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS said that the House had already decided to increase the number of men employed in the Navy. It was open to the hon. Member to move that their pay should be reduced; otherwise he did not see how he could cut down the Vote by three-quarters of a million without reducing the number of men.

Mr. LOUGH had noticed that the maximum number sanctioned by the House had not been fully taken advantage of. He wanted to keep down expenditure, and he thought that the amount voted last year was sufficiently large for the purpose; he therefore objected to the increase. He did not think that there was anything in the condition of affairs which could justify such an increase as this.

*The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS again pointed out that the House had already decided to increase the number of men. If the hon. Member could show that the same number of men could be maintained out of the reduced sum he was entitled to do so; but the general question could not be raised a second time.

Mr. LOUGH said that, broadly speaking he objected to this increase, believing that it would lead to further expenditure later on; hence his Motion to reduce the amount. He was strongly of opinion that the burdens thrown on the people by this constant increase in the expenditure of the Navy were greater than they had experience of in time of peace; and he did not think that they should be increased in the rapid way which had been shown during the last ten years.

The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY said he rose out of courtesy to the hon. Member, but, as had been pointed out by the Chairman, the House had already decided to make this increase in the number of men, and thus the Admiralty now asked that the necessary pay should be provided. The only effect of the Motion of the hon. Member would be to indicate to the Admiralty that a reduction should be made; and he trusted that the hon. Member would withdraw his Motion or proceed at once to a division.

*Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) said there had been nothing this year in the nature of an ordinary statement as to the Navy. The First Lord referred them to a printed statement, but that did not give the information which his hon. Friend wanted, and which he thought he had a right to ask. He said that, although he did not agree with his hon. Friend. The taxpayer had a right to know, whether he took his hon. Friend's view of the matter or not. They had, he repeated, no statement this year, and if they did not get it on the Navy Estimates they should expect from the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the Budget a much fuller statement as to the Army and the Navy. His hon. Friend, he must say, had had no proper opportunity of raising this question of general expenditure on the Navy. As for himself, through the courtesy of the Admiralty, he had been able to work out a statement for himself. He thought he had a knowledge of what had been spent this year, and also some idea of what would be spent next year. He found that it was very difficult, however, to arrive at the information.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY said the right hon. Gentleman had said that the usual statement had not been made this year. Last year he followed the usual course, which he did not follow this year. The right hon. Gentleman gave notice of a Motion, which really covered the whole subject of the naval policy, as to men and shipbuilding. He was obliged to follow him. If the right hon. Gentleman had not made that Motion he should have made his statement in the usual way; but in his reply to the right hon. Gentleman he went fully into the whole subject. After that he did not think it necessary to make any general statement. Next year he would undertake to make the usual statement, hoping that the right hon. Gentleman would not intervene with a Motion.

*SIR C. DILKE said the point to which he referred—and he was not blaming the right hon. Gentleman as to the men and shipbuilding—was the question of expenditure. His hon. Friend had wished to take objection to the expenditure, and he had no opportunity of doing so. More and more money was being taken, but the total amount of the expenditure was not shown. It was clearly their duty to see what was the amount of expenditure. Up to the present they had had no opportunity of discussing that point.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY said at the time the point was raised before, the accounts were not complete. He promised that either on the Loan Bill or on some other occasion a full statement would be made as to the cost of the Navy.

MR. LOUGH asked leave to withdraw his Amendment, after thanking Sir C. Dilke for the lucid way in which he had placed the matter before the Committee.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said that on the point of the training of men he would quote from a remarkable article in *The Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, contributed by Captain Baron Von. Lüttwitz, of the German Grand General staff. He said,

> "Our Navy must be so strong that, after the withdrawal of the cruisers sent to watch foreign coasts, it can successfully cope with the English squadrons which may be in home waters."

He said, further, that in long periods of peace they were apt to exaggerate the importance of numbers; it was the spirit that inspired armies or a fleet. It was useless to have a large number of men on the Vote and large amounts for their pay unless they secured that the men were adequately trained. With regard to the item for certain officers at Jamaica, he utterly condemned the dockyards and hospital there. The hospital should be abolished as utterly useless. Ample notice should, of course, be given. He would appeal to the right hon. Gentleman to give him some assurance that both the dockyard and the hospital would be abolished.

SIR JOHN BAKER (Portsmouth) said he wished to call attention to the case of chief and petty officers in the Navy and their complaints and grievances, which had been before the Admiralty for at least 12 years. When the present Secretary for India was First Lord of the Admiralty he gave an assurance to the then Members for the constituency he now represented that these matters should be favourably considered. The Admiralty he had the honour to support gave the same assurance, and yet the claims of this large body of men still remained neglected. It was very remarkable that, while for the corresponding ranks in the Army and Marines pecuniary advantages were easily obtained, the Navy seemed to have been very badly treated in that particular. Probably that was accounted for by the fact that the Army and Marines had been so largely represented in the House. He hoped the First Lord would give an assurance that he would rearrange the whole scale under which chief and petty officers were employed. All they asked for was 1s. 2d. per day for each year of a second period of service, and that chief petty officers should be placed on a higher scale of pension than the first-class petty officer.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: The question of pensions should be raised when the Pensions Vote comes on.

SIR J. BAKER said there was another matter which caused a very great grievance in connection with the marking of parchments. A man might have served 19 years, during which his marks had been "very good," but for his last year he only got a "good" mark. The penalty for that was that his pension was reduced to 8d. a day. He hoped the First Lord would look into that matter and devise some remedy for it. ["Hear, hear!"] If these grievances were remedied, it would add largely to the popularity of the service, and would induce men who now refused to enter for a second period to remain in the service. That, he would point out, would be an absolute saving to the Government, seeing that it cost £200 to train a man. Moreover, the men who re-entered formed a steady, reliable body of men, and the loss by the withdrawal of trained men could not be over-estimated. ["Hear, hear!"] He would also ask the right hon. Gentleman to give some attention to the case of the stokers. The difficulty of obtaining men in this capacity arose from the fact that they were not offered sufficiently good wages. All the stokers asked for was to be put on the same footing as other men. They asked that, on re-entering for a second period of service, 2d. a day should be given to them as it was given to men of the seamen class, and leading stokers asked for the 3d. a day after four years which petty officers received. He knew the enormous difficulty the Admiralty had with the stoker class, and he was sure that many of the obstacles in the way of their re-entering would be removed by a slight addition to their pay. ["Hear, hear!"]

*THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. W. E. MACARTNEY, Antrim, S.) said that the grievances to which the hon. Member had alluded had been fully considered by previous Boards of Admiralty. He could not say that he thought that to put the petty officers on an equality with what were called the corresponding ranks in the Army and Marines would really be to their interest. The opinion he had formed coincided with that formed by previous Boards. The hon. Member had referred to the assessing of character on parchment certificates. That might occur in regard to any rating in the Navy, and he could not give him an assurance that any alteration would be made in the direction he desired. It would be very difficult to make a distinction in the case of one particular rating, and it would certainly not be conducive to the maintenance of discipline or beneficial to the men themselves. ["Hear, hear!"] There was no doubt that the increasing number of men who left the Navy with a certificate of the highest class was due to the fact that the regulations with regard to this matter were extremely strict. With regard to re-engagement, the hon. Gentleman seemed to think that the figures upon that point were not favourable, but he would point out that of every 100 seamen who completed their first engagement, 55 per cent. re-engaged at once, and 12 per cent. after more or less short periods on shore, and the Admiralty had no doubt that the percentage would increase year by year. As to the supply of stokers, he could assure the hon. Gentleman that there was no difficulty whatever in obtaining an ample supply of men who in every way satisfied the conditions laid down, and the figures with regard to the re-entry of stokers were even more favourable than those with regard to seamen. Of every 100 stokers who completed their first period of service, 72 per cent. re-engaged at once and 12 per cent. after a short period on shore. Therefore there was no reason why the Admiralty should invite the country to go to any further expense, as the pay of the stokers seemed quite sufficient to attract the requisite class of men. ["Hear, hear!"]

Original Question put, and agreed to.

ARMY, 1896-97.

2. £100, Ordnance Factories (Supplementary).—Agreed to.

CIVIL SERVICES (EXCESS) 1895-96.

3. £263 4s. 1d., Mint, including Coinage.—Agreed to.

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1897-8.

4. £648,800, Works, Buildings, and Repairs, at home and abroad.—Agreed to.

5. £1,384,600, Victualling and Clothing for the Navy.

MR. HUDSON KEARLEY (Devonport) said that he wished to call attention to the order issued last year by the Commander-in-Chief at Devonport, with reference to the question of seamen wearing plain clothes on shore. In a communication which he had sent to the First Lord he pointed out that the order did not apply in the case of Portsmouth, and that when an attempt was made some twenty years ago to enforce an order of the kind, so much dissatisfaction was rightly expressed by the local tradesmen that the Admiralty allowed the order to lapse without officially withdrawing it. At Devonport the order had been allowed to lapse until the arrival of the new Commander-in-Chief, and its enforcement affected a large body of traders in the place, who, until then, had had the advantage of supplying the men with plain clothes. The wish of the men to wear plain clothes on shore was not due to their being in any way ashamed of their uniform. They were, on the contrary, proud of it; but the conditions of life in port were such that the very best men found it desirable to wear plain clothes on land. The petty officers in harbour vessels, doing port duties, resided on shore, and naturally, when they went home, many of them liked to take a share in local affairs, and the wearing of plain clothes then resolved itself into a question of comfort and convenience. In the West of England nonconformity was very strong, and a large number of petty officers took leading parts in religious work, and it seemed to them that uniform was rather out of place in church or chapel, when the man wearing it was taking an active part in the service. Officers were subject to the same regulations as applied to the men, but in the officers' case the regulations were not enforced with rigidity. The same liberty ought to be extended to a seaman, who lived perhaps for three years at a home port, and who went on shore to his home night after night. Many men at Devonport who objected to the rigid enforcement of the order had shifted their quarters, so as to be outside the area patrolled by the naval patrol. There was another matter relating to the question of clothing which he wished to bring forward. Hitherto, chief petty officers and other ratings who wore the blue cloth had been allowed, on promotion, to get their outfits from their own outfitters, but recently an order had been issued that these men on joining or on promotion must procure their uniforms from the Government contractor. That had affected seriously the traders of Devonport, among whom the orders for these uniforms used to be distributed. The enforcement of the new order by the Admiralty meant a displacement of trade amounting to £15,000, and the loss of employment by a large number of men. It was his opinion that petty officers and others ought to be allowed to obtain their uniforms from whatever outfitters they preferred. The outfitters were quite willing to conform to any standard which the Admiralty might lay down, and there ought to be no difficulty about securing uniformity of uniform. The new order appeared to him to amount in its results to an infringement of the Truck Act. Considering the great amount of dissatisfaction that was created by this order among the local trading community, he thought the Admiralty might well be lenient in their application of it. Such leniency would not be followed by any harmful results.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY said that he could not admit that tradesmen in dockyard towns had any right to interfere in the smallest degree in questions which were matters of discipline. ["Hear, hear!"] The prosperity of these towns, he knew, depended largely on the expenditure in the dockyards, but when it was gravely suggested that such a question as whether plain clothes should be worn by seamen on shore ought to be decided by the local outfitters he thought the line must be drawn. ["Hear, hear!"] He knew that there was considerable agitation on this subject in dockyard towns—an agitation raised by the outfitters. Not long ago a deputation from a dockyard town proposed to wait upon him for the purpose of convincing him that bluejackets ought to wear plain clothes more than they did for the benefit of the townspeople. He refused to receive the deputation, not from want of courtesy, but because he did not think that the local authorities of the dockyard towns had any *locus standi* in the matter. It was not for them to decide how often and on what occasions bluejackets should wear uniform. According to what he had heard, when young sailors received their pay, outfitters rushed at them and tried to persuade them to wear private clothes. That was not a practice which he cared to encourage. Captains of ships had drawn his attention to this practice, and there was nothing improbable in the allegation, for as these towns were so anxious for custom it would be very unlike tradesmen not to take the first opportunity of getting hold of those who were likely to become good customers. The very importance that was attached to the question in dockyard towns showed how interested the townspeople were in promoting a custom which the Admiralty certainly did not wish to promote. It had been suggested that it was out of place for men in the Navy to appear in a Sunday school, or church, or chapel, in uniform. The present system was not worked harshly, but generously, and it was the opinion of the Admiralty, as, indeed, of all naval men, that it was to the interest of the service generally that uniform should be worn in the dockyard towns, and they were not prepared to depart in any way from that general position. ["Hear, hear!"] Every facility was given where it was necessary or clear that an advantage would arise from the wearing of plain clothes for this to be done, but the Admiralty did not wish to depart from the present practice, nor could he hold out any hope to the hon. Member that they would do so. The system of supplying the cloth for the uniforms from one Department insured that the same quality should be provided for all the men, and prevented that diversity of pattern which was frequent before the existing arrangement was entered into. Formerly, when the men purchased their uniforms privately it was found that they were not quite right, and the defect had to be corrected at their own expense, or they had to purchase new uniforms. If it were shown that the uniforms now supplied to the men were of an inferior quality, that they had to pay more for them, or that there was any drawback which weighed heavily upon those who took their uniforms in this way from the Government stores, he would give the matter his best consideration. It was necessary that the men who entered the Navy should get their first uniform supplied from the Government stores, but inquiries should be made as to whether the men who re-entered were compelled to follow the same course.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES, whilst agreeing that a certain amount of laxity should be given in certain instances, considered that, in dockyard towns, it was extremely important that the men, unless there was grave and good reason against it, should go ashore wearing their uniform. He did not believe they were ashamed of their uniforms, but that, on the contrary, they were extremely proud of them. Again, it was an advantage that the naval uniform should be seen on shore. It was so little known that, when an officer came to London, people would fancy he was a railway servant, or something of that sort, and ask him what time the next train went to Exeter. [*Laughter.*] It was unfortunate that the naval uniform should be so little known, and inasmuch as the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Kearley), who represented the cause of the vendors of "reach-me-downs," had no further argument than want of comfort to advance, he really thought his case fell to the ground.

*SIR EDWARD GOURLEY (Sunderland) thought that with regard to the wearing of plain clothing, the same latitude should be extended to the ordinary seamen as was extended to the officers. It was quite natural that a seaman should desire to be relieved from the necessity of wearing uniform when he was attending divine service. He thought the hon. Member for Devonport had made out a good case for re-instituting the system by which, for a considerable period, men of all classes in the Navy were allowed to appear in plain clothes.

Vote agreed to.

6. £161,400 Medical Establishments and Services.—Agreed to.

7. £10,600 Martial Law.

*SIR EDWARD GOURLEY drew attention to the Lewes Prison, and asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether it was not the fact that a large number of seamen were sent there before their cases were adjudicated upon by Courts Martial?

He was quite certain there was an abuse there, and he called attention to it, with a view to securing a remedy.

*MR. MACARTNEY promised that inquiry should be made into the matter.

*MR. CHARLES HARRISON (Plymouth) drew attention to the system of Naval Courts Martial. Up to 1881, the system of Courts Martial in the Army prevented any ordinary procedure being adopted such as existed in other courts of judicature, and a prisoner was obliged to have his questions written down, and they could only be addressed to the witnesses by and through the Court. This resulted in the destruction of many advantages to be derived from a verbal examination, and an examination on the spot. That system was entirely altered for the Army, and in 1893 a procedure was adopted which was the same as that now ordinarily followed in the ordinary courts of law. That was to say, the solicitor, or counsel, or friend of the prisoner had the right of appearing for him and of conducting the examination in the usual way. But whilst that was the reformed system now applicable to Military Courts Martial, the present system of procedure in Naval Courts Martial was fixed by the Naval Discipline Act of 1866; and the Admiralty Instructions of 1893, framed under this old statute, followed much the same system as that followed in the old Courts of Chancery. Written interrogatories were administered, and the answer to each interrogatory was written down. In the Courts of Chancery this procedure was abolished many years ago and in the Naval Courts Martial alone was the system perpetuated under the Act of 1866. The procedure in Military Courts Martial should be adapted to the Courts of other arms of the Service. Besides this, whilst Military Courts Martial could adjourn, the statute of 1866 prevented the Naval Courts Martial adjourning. Naval Courts Martial often had to adjourn from day to day for the attendance of witnesses whose evidence was deemed desirable; but, owing to the power to adjourn being prohibited by statute, the Court had to go through the farce of meeting daily in the interim till the final date when the business could be disposed of. This wasted the time of the members of the Court and involved expense. He trusted that the procedure in Naval and Military Courts Martial would be made alike.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY said that the procedure which had been followed so long had worked extremely well, and miscarriages of justice had been extremely rare. But he would look into the matter.

MR. KEARLEY said he wished to complain of the disqualification of Royal Marine officers from sitting on Naval Courts Martial when afloat. When the late Sir John Pope Hennessey brought the matter forward on the Army Annual Bill in 1891, the then First Lord of the Admiralty gave a definite promise that he would move an Amendment to the Naval Discipline Act giving Royal Marine officers a privilege which they enjoyed on shore. The First Lord said:—

> "A good many naval officers objected to the proposed change. I personally cannot see why the change should not be made, and I will undertake to consider the matter, and propose an Amendment to the Naval Discipline Act this Session or next to carry it out."

He trusted the present First Lord would carry out the pledge of his predecessor.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY said that as he read the "pledge," it merely was to consider the matter. Naval officers raised considerable objections, both from technical and disciplinary points of view, to the proposed change. He would consider the matter, but he could not definitely pledge himself to accede to the request of the hon. Member.

Vote agreed to.

8. £249,900, Royal Naval Reserves.

*SIR C. DILKE asked if the First Lord of the Admiralty could enlighten the Committee as to the progress made in training the Reserve. It was stated that in the increased amount of the Vote provision had been made for the increased attendance at drill apart from embarkation on board ships. The present drill in the batteries did not afford sufficient training for the men. The First Lord had taken credit for improving the batteries, but they were still, in the opinion of those who had visited them, far from giving a satisfactory training in gunnery and discipline. Some improved guns had been put into them, but they were not of the most modern description. He should also be glad to hear what steps had been taken to improve the system of six months' training, which had seemed hitherto to be rather a failure.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES also asked for information as to the guns which had been supplied to the batteries. There had been certain improvements, but he was afraid they were slight. To train the men with old-fashioned guns was of very little use. Training men for ship service in a battery ashore had serious disadvantages, as all sorts of assumptions had to be made. The men ought to be trained in a ship, or hulk, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman was preparing to abolish entirely the present system of training in batteries in favour of ships. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would be able to give them some further information as to the prospects of the exceedingly interesting and serious experiment he was about to make of embarking second class men on board district ships for six months' training. Perhaps this was an attempt to substitute drill in ships for drill in batteries ashore, but in many cases there were no district ships, and it would be rather inconvenient if the men had to go a long distance for their training. The difficulty about reserve men was not that they were badly trained, but that it was very hard to get them to submit to the necessary restraint of naval discipline. In the naval service one man had to do one thing, and another man another, whereas it was different in the merchant service and in fishing vessels. Another point was that these men, when taken on board ship, were commonly put to the meanest and lowest jobs, and this discouraged them. He hoped the Admiralty would make this six months attractive to the men, and bring down the pension from the age of 60 to 50.

The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY said that with regard to batteries being fitted with modern guns, a number of batteries had had an addition made to their armaments during 1896-97. They were doing their best, and they thoroughly appreciated the great importance of having these modern guns. He was afraid it would be a long time before they should go as far as to do away with the batteries altogether. There were two different lines of policy which might be adopted—one would be to do away with the batteries and only employ district ships for training the men, and the other would be to employ district ships where possible while keeping up the supply of guns and so forth in the batteries. He placed the ships in the first rank, and these armament batteries in the second rank, but the Committee would see that they had certainly not neglected the case of these batteries, and had made it part of their duty to improve the drill wherever possible. In the scheme of mobilisation the newest ships would have the fewest Reserves, and as they got to the older ships they would increase the proportion of the number of Reserve men. The older ships, of course, were not fitted with such modern guns, and, therefore, if the Reserves were trained to use such guns as were in the older ships, it must not be thought that their work was thrown away. They would naturally all be trained as far as possible with modern guns. He begged the Committee would consider in all these matters how difficult it was to make rapid and proportionate progress in every direction proposed. Of the new scheme in regard to the Naval Reserve, he could not give final and absolute particulars, but he could give a sketch of the plan they were working out with all the attention they could bestow upon it. He hoped very shortly it would be in active operation. The cardinal points were to secure six months' training if it could possibly be done, and to do away with the old distinctions between first and second class, and establish a system of promotion from one class to the other. They based their hopes of success on two points—the promotion from the second class to the first class, dependent upon the six months' training, and on the pension. It was thought that the pension which was proposed would be one of the chief attractions which would induce the men to go for the six months' training. He had again been reassured that it was expected that the present second class men would avail themselves to a great extent of this offer. Of course only experience could show what the result would be, but those who were in touch with the whole of our Service were extremely hopeful that the attraction held out in the scheme would be sufficient for their purpose. He rather thought that the number of Reserves who might be expected to come forward had been underestimated, and the Committee would agree that if, besides the hold the Admiralty now had over them, they could have the additional hold of the advantages that would be forfeited if they did not appear, then there was considerable security for their appearance at periods of emergency. It had not been thought necessary to propose a larger increase until they had had some experience of how the experiment of sea-training resulted. With experience they could with some approach to certainty say to what extent the Reserves should be increased. He would not say the point at which they should stop, but first let them be content with the present proposal until the result of the experiment was known. It would be better to have 25,000, of whom 20,000 had been to sea for six months, than a larger number untrained. ["Hear!"] He could not guarantee the success of the scheme, but he would be disappointed if it did not succeed. The Admiralty had taken all reasonable means to secure a successful result to their experiments, but could not guarantee success. For the 600 Reserve men who would be afloat at one time the best arrangements that were possible would be made. It was not easy at first sight to see how the distribution could be arranged. Of course the training must be on ships not engaged on distant cruises, for the term of training was only six months, but the Admiralty officials were carefully considering how the six months would be best employed. So far as he could he had given the outlines of the proposal, and was ready to answer any further questions, admitting the value of a full discussion upon it.

Mr. W. ALLAN (Gateshead) said he had listened with great interest to the right hon. Gentleman's statement of the scheme proposed in regard to the Reserves. The amount of money for the Reserves, £249,900, was far too small, and the increase was not enough to call forth adequate Reserves for the Fleet. He turned to the pages of the Estimates relating to the Reserves. He was told the other day that the Admiralty were getting plenty of engineers and artificers for the Navy, and that there was an ample reserve, but he found that the reserve of engineers was as last year, 300; no increase at all. The amount of money for lieutenants and sub-lieutenants was only increased by £500, but there were no additions to engineers. Why had not the First Lord made arrangements for increasing the reserve of engineers? He was told the other day of some 98 torpedo boats rusting in various yards at home and abroad; could they be manned should they be required? Why should these remain useless in basins and creeks? Why should not a scheme be formulated for the training of engineers for the Reserve, and one of these torpedo boats be stationed at every port and at the mouth of every river round our coasts for the training of engineer reserves? Why should not a torpedo boat be stationed at Sunderland and on the Tyne for such training purposes? He had repeatedly urged the training of engineers for the Reserve, but his words had been very lightly treated by the Admiralty. As he read in the Portsmouth correspondence, the steam reserve was terribly short of officers and men. There were not enough to keep ships moderately efficient, and when the *Mars* completed her trials at the end of the week and the *Powerful* went for her gun trails there would not be enough men for both ships at once.

The FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY said the hon. Member was not referring to the Naval Reserve?

Mr. ALLAN said he was speaking of the reserve of engineers, but he would not proceed if it was a painful subject to the right hon. Gentleman.

The FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY said he did not know whether the hon. Member meant the Naval Reserve; the Portsmouth correspondent was alluding to the active list of the steam reserve and dockyard reserve.

Mr. ALLAN said if that was the condition of the active list, where were the reserve engineers? There were 300 down in the Estimates but no more. Was it not an extraordinary state of affairs that, with an expenditure of 22 millions, there should be no reserve of engineers? It was all very well to say you could get 25,000 reserve men, but where were the firemen and engineers? What would be the use of bluejackets if there were no firemen and engineers? He would like to see in the Estimates provision made for engineers and firemen to man every ship in case of need. If the Reserve ships were mobilised, were there engineers to put on board of them? No; for there were but 300 engineers in the Reserve. The right hon. Gentleman would be well advised if he had put down double the amount of money and made it half a million for the Reserves. What availed it to put on board the Reserve ships bluejackets and men to work the guns, if there were not men below to work the heart and life of the ship in the engine room? At every port there should be a torpedo boat, and every encouragement should be given to young men to join the engineer reserve. He had little doubt that apprentices and young men would join, he could himself induce a score of such to join. Put down half a million or more for Reserves, and let the country have the satisfaction of knowing that for every ship afloat there were the men to man her at any moment when required.

Mr. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.) said the practical knowledge and experience of the hon. Member who had just spoken entitled his observations on engineering subjects to careful consideration. Whether correctly or not he did not know, but it was reported at the time of the late naval manœuvres that so short were the Admiralty of engineers that they even had to withdraw a few from the Royal yacht. At the moment we had in the Reserves between 23,000 and 24,000 men. That was an absolutely insufficient number in the event of war. It had been calculated that in the first six or eight months of a naval war we would lose from 20 to 25 per cent. of the men in the Fleet. How could those losses be replaced? Where would we get engineers to replace the engineers of the first line? He contended that the Naval Reserve should be not 23,000 men, its present strength, but at least 50,000 or 60,000 men. A very large percentage of the men who left the Army after five or six years' service went into the Reserve, and the State paid a large sum to maintain them. But nothing of that kind was done in the Navy. When the men left the Fleet, after 10 or 21 years' service, no effort was made, as in the Army, to retain them in the Reserve. He would suggest that in order to bring the Reserve up to the proper strength, a bonus should be given, not only to the sailors who served in the Mercantile Marine, but to the shipowners, to retain in their service men who would be available for the Reserve; and also that inducements should be held out by the offer of bounties to the fishermen and others connected with the sea in our colonies to serve in the Fleet in case of emergency. In that way the colonies would be knit together with the Mother Country in a grand Imperial system for the defence of the Empire. He also thought the number of training ships should be increased. There were parts of the kingdom from which, if there were only training ships there, a large number of boys could be obtained for the Navy. He admitted that the Admiralty had taken a step or two in the right direction, but, in his opinion it was a monstrous thing that we, who were able to build ships year after year faster than any other nation, should not have sufficient men to man them in times of difficulty and danger. He ventured to think that the House would most willingly vote a million of money for a sufficient Reserve, and thus show to foreign countries that if our first line of defence should unfortunately be defeated, we would have sufficient men and sufficient ships to retrieve the disaster.

*__Captain PHILLPOTTS__ (Devon, Torquay) considered that the scheme which had been presented to the Committee by the First Lord of the Admiralty was a good step in the direction of obtaining a really efficient Reserve; and he had no doubt that under it the Admiralty would be able to obtain as many men as they desired. In certain batteries there were men who looked upon the Reserve as a gigantic system of outdoor relief. That feeling did not prevail in the South of England, but he knew it existed in the North of Scotland. In 1886, when there was an impression that this country would be engaged in a naval war, he had had the honour of commanding a large battery of Reserve men, among whom there was a very strong feeling in favour of volunteering. He desired to join in the appeal of his hon. Friend the Member for King's Lynn to the First Lord of the Admiralty to lower the age at which men in the Naval Reserve became entitled to a pension. For men who followed the hard life of the sea 60 years was a very high age for a pension, and he believed that if the age were lowered to 50 years the Admiralty would get a much better class of men.

*__Sir EDWARD GOURLEY__ expressed the opinion that the scheme propounded by the First Lord of the Admiralty was doomed to failure at the outset. Before entering on the new departure, the Admiralty ought to have initiated some system under which the existing Reserve could be reorganised and made more efficient.

A great deal had been said in and out of the House with regard to the efficiency of their Naval Reserves. It had been alleged that, in the event of war, their Naval Reserves would not come forward for the purpose either of serving or of replacing that waste which must naturally occur during war. As against those allegations he would like to mention the Report of the Departmental Committee, presided over by the late Admiral Tryon, which sat for the purpose of inquiring into the then existing organisation of the Reserve. One point of the inquiry was to ascertain whether the men would or would not come forward in the event of an emergency. In accordance with the evidence, and the facts and figures placed before the Committee, they found that, out of a Reserve of something like 20,000 men, there came up for drill in the year 1891 no fewer than 18,800 men, nearly half of them belonging to the seafaring class. It was also found that out of those 18,800 men, 16,000 of them were employed in the home or coasting trade, and 2,500 only were engaged in the long voyage trade. This was disproof of the allegation that, in the event of an emergency, the Reserves would not be available. He held that the Naval Reserve proper ought to be raised to the numbers in accordance with the Act of 1859, namely, 30,000 men. In his opinion, the Admiralty were not utilising the material they had at hand, and which they could utilise at a very small expense. They were not utilising the material they had at hand in connection with their seamen and fishermen. He held, therefore, that it was the bounden duty of the Admiralty at once to increase the Reserve under a system which could be extended, and not to enter upon this Utopian scheme of creating a new reserve by enrolling a number of men for six months, because he felt bound to say that the scheme was doomed to be unsuccessful, as men would not leave good employment for six months, which, when finished, might leave them in the same predicament as the men of the Army Reserves—namely, swelling the ranks of the unskilled unemployed. He held that, in addition to the resources in this kingdom, there were other resources out of which reserves might be raised which had never yet been tapped. There were, for instance, 70,000 men and boys engaged in seafaring life, in the coasting and fishing trades of Newfoundland. They ought to enlist a large number of men in their Naval Reserve in connection with their colonies, who, in the event of war, would be invaluable in replacing the waste and in supplying any loss which might occur in connection with the men on board the Fleet on the North American station. He was glad to hear from the First Lord that their obsolete batteries were at last to be done away with and re-armed, but he held that the whole of the men in connection with the Naval Reserve should as far as possible be sent on board and be made familiar with the working of the ships on which they might one day have to fight. All classes of ships should be sent to the several Reserve Districts, and the men trained on board at sea, without, however, interfering materially with their shore employment.

Captain BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) said that the Admiralty, having left the old groove, would no doubt take this matter in hand with the greatest zeal and enthusiasm, and he was quite ready to believe that his right hon. Friend and those who advised him had turned the information at their disposal to the best account on this occasion. He should have thought that there was further room for further consideration as to whether 60 was not somewhat too old for a pension, but that seemed to be regarded as a proper age by a considerable number of persons, and he had no very strong views on the subject himself. He was disposed, looking far ahead, to rely much more upon a real Reserve than a good many Gentlemen who addressed that House and many Gentlemen who had had official connection with the Admiralty. He quite agreed with the First Lord that they could not expect this country to keep on the active list a larger number of seamen than what they now understood as a liberal allowance—at this moment, he supposed, something like 100,000 men. But he thought they would have, in the future, to rely much more upon a highly-trained Reserve. He was inclined to think that the sound policy would be to affiliate to their existing system a system of short service. He thought it was very doubtful indeed whether six months' training would be sufficient to make the men efficient for the purpose. He doubted whether anything under two or three years would really make a Reserve such as they understood by a Reserve when they spoke of it in connection with the Army. The Admiralty could not easily have taken a step of this kind all at once. He congratulated the First Lord on what he had done, and, if it were successful, it would effect a great improvement, because there was no doubt whatever that the Reserve to-day was completely unsatisfactory. Whatever the willingness and zeal of the men, the training had hitherto been so insufficient that in case of war a small number of Reserve men would have had to be scattered among a large number of trained men. The suggestion that engineers and firemen should be trained on torpedo boats stationed at various ports was well worthy of consideration. The engineers from the merchant service could no doubt do useful service on the large men of war, but the engines and boilers of torpedo boats and destroyers would be wholly unfamiliar to them. They were of quite a different type.

MR. JOHN PENN (Lewisham) said that if the fresh departure made this year were judiciously carried out it would be of the utmost value to the service. It was most important that the Reserve men should receive a training in the home ports, where they could become acquainted with the construction and repair of machinery, and where they could be sent out on the various vessels making the trials. The experience of the new type boilers and engines running at the highest pressure which they would thus get, was something which no six months at sea would supply.

*GENERAL LAURIE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest) asked how it came that 300 boys were included in the Reserve. Boys should be trained for the Navy, not for the Reserve. Of the 1,400 officers on the Reserve establishment this year, he believed that nearly all were employed on ocean going steamers. In this duty, they simply went to and fro over one route. Now the Navy, in time of war, would have a great deal of coast duty to do, and men who knew every headland, harbour, current and tide, would be most useful in such work. There were hundreds of men in Canada—the masters of steamers on the coasting trade—who would be most valuable in the Reserve. Why did not the Admiralty avail themselves of such men? Last week he had been reported to say that there were from 4,000 to 5,000 deep-sea fishermen in Canada. Those figures related to the number in his own constituency; the number in all Canada was 71,000.

MR. J. C. MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe) called the attention of the Admiralty to the large number of "ready-made men" that were available for the Navy on the River Thames, at the port of London. There were between 10,000 and 12,000 watermen and lightermen exclusively employed on the Thames, and able and willing to serve their country. At a large meeting, held about a year ago, more than 1,000 of the men volunteered to give their services to the country as Reservists, if the Government would only grant them the same facilities as their fellows enjoyed at other ports in the country. These men would be most valuable, for, in case of war, the enemy would certainly make straight for London.

*MR. MACARTNEY said that the "ready-made men" in his hon. Friend's constituency were essentially river men, and had not the preliminary sea-training which men in the Reserve possessed. He did not think his hon. Friend's constituency was in danger of invasion; but he would rather offer his hon. Friend to a foreign foe than increase the expenditure on the Reserve to include the men his hon. Friend had mentioned. As to the sources suggested by the hon. and gallant Member for Pembroke, that opened large Imperial questions which had not been contemplated by the Admiralty in this connection. The Admiralty had taken a new departure and proposed to offer facilities to a proportion of engineer officers in the Naval Reserve to attend for a three months' training at one of the ports this year. If this step were a success, the Admiralty would no doubt follow it up. They were quite conscious of the benefits which would be derived from a large number of engineer officers coming forward for this training. The hon. Member for Gateshead had said the Admiralty had torpedo-boats in various ports but could not man them. There was no foundation for that assumption. The manning of such boats was provided for among the Active Service men voted in the Estimates, and it was not the intention of the Board of Admiralty that engineer officers in the Naval Reserve should serve on torpedo-boats or torpedo-boat destroyers. In time of war vessels of this class would be manned exclusively by engineer officers engine room artificers and stokers of the Royal Navy. The only other point he had to notice was that raised by the hon. Member for St. Pancras. It was not the fact that during the recent manœuvres engineer officers had to be withdrawn from the Royal Yacht because they were required for other ships.

Mr. ALLAN asked why the Admiralty had not more than 300 reserve engineers.

*Mr. MACARTNEY thought he had made that plain. They did not require any more. According to their calculations they had sufficient engineer officers in the Royal Navy to man the Fleet. They had 300 in the Naval Reserve who might become available in the event of waste of war, but they were not required for mobilisation.

Mr. ALLAN said he had shown conclusively that they could not man the Fleet at present; 300 reserve engineers were not reserve at all for the Navy of Great Britain. Instead of a paltry £250,000 being taken for the reserve, they ought to take half-a-million sterling, and instead of having 300 reserve engineers, they should have something like 3,000. The Admiralty would not give young engineers encouragement to join the service. Three or four years ago he undertook to get 50 reserve engineers if the country would only give them a retaining fee of £10 or £15 a year and allow them to wear a jacket with brass buttons. Hundreds were to be got at every engineering port if proper encouragement were given.

Vote agreed to.

9. £2,675,000 Naval Armaments.

*Captain PHILLPOTTS remarked that about ten years ago the Ordnance Department was placed under the the Admiralty, and Parliament was informed that the conduct of that Department would be handed over to naval officers. Although ten years had elapsed, not a naval officer was employed on the work. Was there any chance of gunnery officers or officers thoroughly qualified being intrusted with those duties?

*Mr. MACARTNEY said that the future of the Naval Ordnance Department had not yet been definitely settled. It was still under consideration whether it was advisable, or possible, in all cases to substitute naval officers for the present officers, who were drawn from the Army. He could not give his hon. and gallant Friend any definite information now.

Vote agreed to.

10. £195,400, Miscellaneous Effective Services.—Agreed to.

11. £243,600, Admiralty Office.—Agreed to.

12. £749,500, Half Pay, Reserved, and Retired Pay.—Agreed to.

13. £1,053,200, Naval and Marine Pensions, Gratuities, and Compassionate Allowances.—Agreed to.

14. £327,400, Civil Pensions and Gratuities.—Agreed to.

15. £60,300, Additional Naval Force for Service in Australasian Waters.

*Sir C. DILKE asked whether anything was being done to improve the cruisers on the Australian station.

The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY said it was proposed to gradually substitute other ships for those now employed on the station. The same course was being followed in other cases. ["Hear, hear!"]

Vote agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported upon Monday next; Committee to sit again upon Monday next.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Considered in Committee.

1. Resolved, that, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the years ending on the 31st day of March 1896 and 1897, the sum of £2,230,835 17s. 1d. be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

2. Resolved, that, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March 1898, the sum of £24,327,700 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

Resolutions to be reported upon Monday next; Committee to sit again upon Monday next.

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment. Read the Third time, and passed.

Notice taken that 40 Members were not present. House counted, and, 40 Members not being present,

The House was Adjourned at Twenty Minutes past Eight of the Clock, till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 22nd March 1897.

EARL OF NORMANTON.

Report made from the Lord Chancellor, that the right of Sidney James Ellis Agar, Earl of Normanton, to vote at the elections of Representative Peers for Ireland has been established to the satisfaction of the Lord Chancellor. Read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

ISLE OF MAN (CHURCH BUILDING ACTS) BILL [H.L.].

Read 3^a (according to Order), passed, and sent to the Commons.

SURVEYORS (COUNTY DUBLIN) BILL.

Read 3^a (according to Order), and passed.

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

Read 1^a; and to be printed.—[No. 34.]

House Adjourned at Half-past Four o'Clock, till To-morrow, a Quarter past Ten o'Clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 22nd March 1897.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

THE CITY OF LONDON (INCLUSION OF SOUTHWARK) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a Second time."

MR. R. K. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.) rose to a point of order. He wished to ask the ruling of the right hon. Gentleman in the Chair whether it was in order for this Measure to be brought forward as a private Bill? He submitted that, as presented to the House, it was distinctly a disfranchising Measure, and he wished to ask whether there was any precedent for similar action being allowed to be taken by means of a private Bill, and whether the proposals which it contained ought not to have been submitted to the House in the form of a public Bill. His contention was that under the form of a Bill for certain purposes all lodgers, women ratepayers, and service voters in those portions of the Borough of Southwark affected by this Bill would be deprived of the franchise which they now enjoyed. The Measure proposed to abolish the St. Saviour's and St. Olave's District Boards of Works and to hand over the duties hitherto discharged by those bodies to the Corporation of the City of London. At present the District Boards of Works were elected by St. Saviour's, Christchurch, and other vestries, and for those bodies lodgers, women ratepayers, and service voters had votes. If the Bill became law the Court of Common Council of the City of London would discharge the duties hitherto performed by the district boards. The members of the Court of Common Council for the City of London were elected by male occupiers only, which meant that a large proportion of the present voters in Southwark would be deprived of voice and vote in local matters in which they were deeply interested. The Bill also proposed to alter the powers of the Local Government Board by depriving it of its power to vary at discretion the arrangement of parishes, and to transfer the area of added parishes to a totally different kind of local government. In all these circumstances he asked the ruling of the right hon. Gentleman in the Chair upon the question whether this should have been a public and not a private Bill?

*MR. SPEAKER: I have considered carefully this Bill, and I am of opinion that there is no case calling for interference on my part at this stage. The questions raised by the hon. Member are no doubt very important and worthy of the consideration of the House, but they are not matters which would justify me in refusing to submit the Bill for the consideration of the House on Second

Reading. The main object of this Bill is to extend the boundaries of a borough, and that is a proper subject for a private Bill. No doubt in all such cases there are changes in local government, and the changes proposed by this Bill are perhaps more complicated and more numerous than usual; yet that does not justify me in interposing to prevent the House from expressing its opinion on the Second Reading. I therefore leave the matter to the consideration of the House. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. CAUSTON asked whether, as the Committee to whom the Bill would be referred would have power to disfranchise, they would also have power, if they thought fit, to assimilate the franchise of the City of London to that now in operation in Southwark?

*SIR EDWARD CLARKE (Plymouth), on the point of order, said that the Committee would have no power to disfranchise.

*MR. SPEAKER: I think that the Question of the franchise in the City of London is outside this Bill. ["Hear, hear!"]

*MR. E. H. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.), in rising to move to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months," said that he was much surprised that no hon. Member opposite had attempted to inform the House what the Measure really was, and what it proposed to do. Although the Bill might be technically in order, it involved, in his opinion, a serious abuse of the rules that governed private Bill legislation. The Bill proposed to extend the City boundaries by adding the parishes of St. Saviour, Christchurch, St. Olave, St. Thomas, and St. John. With all deference to the view of the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite, he submitted that the Measure was absolutely without precedent, and was framed upon lines which he hoped the House would not encourage. The Measure proposed to repeal portions of seven sets of public Acts, and, he submitted, to do so by means of a private Bill was a most inconvenient course of proceeding. There was scarcely a Government Department whose jurisdiction was not attacked by this Bill, which ran counter to the recommendations of all the Royal Commissions which had considered the question of London government, while it was directly in conflict with the policy of recent legislation in reference to the question of the government of London. The right hon. Gentleman in the Chair had ruled that it was by no means unusual for corporations under the Municipal Corporations Act to come to Parliament and ask for powers to enable them to include within their boundaries urban districts which had grown up around them. But he must point out in the first place that the Corporation of the City of London was not subject to the Municipal Corporations Act, and that it remained an unreformed corporation to this day. The Corporation sought to include within its jurisdiction an area half the size of the area which it controlled at the present time, and a population of some 38,000. The Bill sought to bring that large area and that large population under the operation of charters which the Royal Commission of 1854 had declared could only be interpreted by means of antiquarian research. That House was asked to take a leap in the dark by extending the areas over which the charters operated. The preamble of the Measure suggested that its provisions were founded upon an historical basis, but that was a mere fiction. The boundaries of the districts proposed to be dealt with by the Bill were not conterminous with those covered by the Charter, for it did not include the parish of St. George's, to which the charters applied, while it did include the parish of Christchurch, to which they did not apply. He desired to say a word or two about the proposals in the Bill with regard to the Poor Law Unions, which he submitted formed one of the most important parts of the Bill. The parishes which it was proposed to add to the City were at present parts of two Poor Law Unions, and the Bill proposed to take parts of those Unions and to add them to the City, and to leave certain other parts of them as they were at present. What he particularly objected to in the Bill was that it proposed to add the richer portions of those Unions to the City, and to leave the poorer portions as they were. The average rates of the portions of the Unions which the Bill proposed to deal with were 6s. 7d. in the pound, whereas the average rates of the portions that were left were 7s. 5d. in the pound.

That was entirely contrary to the principles of legislation that had prevailed for many years past. During recent years that House had been doing their best to equalise the rates of the metropolis by bringing in the richer districts to the relief of the poorer, whereas this Bill proceeded in exactly the opposite direction. Indeed, as far as he could make out from the documents relating to this Measure, the great inducement held out to the parishes that it proposed to add to the City, to assent to the proposed change, was that they would be joined to richer instead of to poorer parishes. He thought that the House ought to hesitate long before it sanctioned such a proposal as that. What view did the inhabitants of the richer parishes take of the matter? It was found that rich firms like Barclay, Perkins and Co. headed the list of those who guaranteed the expenses of bringing forward this Bill. In his opinion these rich firms by taking this course were grossly disregarding the claims upon them of their poorer neighbours. The Bill, moreover, made a direct assault upon the jurisdiction of the Local Government Board. If there was any ground shown for rearranging the boundaries of the Poor Law Unions, there was no necessity for bringing forward a Bill for the purpose, because the Local Government Board already possessed ample powers to make such rearrangement. An hon. Member near him, who, he believed, was interested in the City, said that the Bill left such rearrangements to the Local Government Board. He was afraid that the hon. Gentleman had never read the Bill, or that he had been led away by the misrepresentations of interested parties. The hon. Gentleman now said that the matter was left to the discretion of the Local Government Board, but that was also a misapprehension, because Clause 12 of the Bill provided that "the Local Government Board shall include" the parishes in question in the City of London Poor Law Union. Therefore, if the Bill passed the House, no discretion whatever in the matter would be left to the Local Government Board, who must act upon the orders which Parliament gave them. Moreover, as long as the Bill continued in force the Local Government Board would be precluded from making any alterations in the boundaries of the Poor Law Unions in question. Then, was the representation to be given to Southwark upon the London Common Council an adequate one? As he had already said, Southwark was half the area of the City of London, and it had a population of 38,000, and yet it was proposed to give it only 16 representatives, who were to be added to the crowd of 222 members of which the Common Council already consisted. The result would be that Southwark would be a nonentity on the Council, and would find itself the Cinderella of the household of the City Corporation. He invited the attention of the right hon. Member for Bodmin (Mr. Courtney) to this point, because, as Chairman of the Royal Commission, he had already expressed a strong opinion as to the absurdly large numbers of the London Common Council as compared with the 70 members of provincial councils, and it was now proposed to add 16 additional representatives to the former, instead of reducing the number. Another effect of the Bill would be that certain of the London County Councillors would have a vote with regard to the expenditure of funds to which their constituents did not contribute. He further objected to the Bill because it proposed to deal with the great question of the government of London by piecemeal legislation. There appeared to have grown up in that House an idea that London was a *corpus vile* upon which all kinds of experiments might be tried with impunity. ["Hear, hear," *and loud counter cheers and laughter.*] He appealed to the Members for Birmingham, Manchester, and Liverpool, and other large cities to do for London as they would have their cities done by, and not let there be forced upon London what they would object to. The hon. Member concluded by moving the rejection of the Bill.

*MR. ALFRED LAFONE (Southwark, Bermondsey) seconded the Amendment, and said he was not actuated by mere sentiment in opposing this Bill. The present Union of St. Olave's was formed in 1869 of the parishes of St. Thomas's, St. Olave's, and St. John's, Bermondsey and Rotherhithe. The parishes of St. Olave's, St. Thomas's, and St. Johns, from 1871 to 1896 lost 25 per cent. of their population, but the population of Rotherhithe and Bermondsey increased by 16,000 or 17,000, and the rateable value of the three parishes which sought to be separated from St. Olave's amounted to an increase of 30 per cent. from 1871, and Bermondsey and Rotherhithe increased in rateable value to the extent of 50 per cent. These were remarkable figures. At the same time there was an increase not only of indoor but outdoor poor. Indoor poor increased about 60 per cent., and outdoor poor about one-third. Indoor and outdoor poor relieved from 1886 to 1896 increased 70 per cent. This was what they had to look in the face. What would be their position in Bermondsey if such a Bill as this passed the House? The promoters of the Bill were owners and occupiers of wharves and warehouses from Horselydown to London Bridge on the one side, and St. Saviour's Union on the other. They had managed between 1871 and 1896 to get rid of a population of 3,833, a decrease of 25 per cent. They had not done less work, but were doing infinitely more, and earning through the people they employed large sums of money. But they had not any convenience for housing the population. He was not speaking in exaggerated terms when he said that there were thousands of men employed on the wharves alone who could not find housing accommodation within the same area, and had to come to Bermondsey and Rotherhithe. The result was some of the workpeople would go through their daily work at the wharves, and when too ill or too old to continue their work, they would be thown on the Union, and one-fourth of the whole of the rateable value of the Union was to be taken away and hardly a fraction of the pauperism. Parish Street Workhouse, with 355 inmates, would be taken away. In the parishes of St. Thomas's, St. John's, and St. Olave's, the number of paupers were small in proportion to population. If the three parishes were separated and one-fourth of the rateable value of the Union taken away, the Local Government Board would say, "You shall not continue to use the old Tanner Street Workhouse. You must pull it down and go outside the area and build another." The lowest cost of replacing the present workhouse was £180,000. This outlay would have to be borne by the two-thirds rateable value still left. Over and above this there were £50,000 old debts, which would have to be liquidated out of the rates. The hon. Member who moved the rejection of the Bill put the rates of the different parishes far too low. The present rates in Bermondsey and Rotherhithe were 8s. 1d. in the pound. If the proposed severance took place it would add 5d. in the pound to the rates, quite irrespective of the enormous amount which would be absolutely necessary for the building and furnishing of the new workhouse. The promoters of the Bill proposed to go back 350 years and take advantage of a charter of that time which gave certain privileges. What had the House to do with 350 years ago? They had to look at the state of things to-day. The Bermondsey Vestry, St. Olave's Guardians, Rotherhithe Vestry, the Vestry of St. George the Martyr, the Guardians of St. Mary Newington, St. Saviour's Union, and the City of London Union, had petitioned against the Bill. But it was said that it was "only a matter of clauses." What clauses? Would Bermondsey and Rotherhithe get back the £15,000 a year they would lose? How were the clauses to be worked out? If he was satisfied that his division of Bermondsey was so safeguarded by these clauses that they would lose nothing from the rates, he would be perfectly satisfied to vote in favour of the Bill. But he knew it was utterly impossible to produce such a result. The Bill not only seriously injured the interests of the ratepayers of the two divisions, but affected the interests of the poor. They would be driven out of St. Thomas's, St. John's, and St. Olave's, and if sick and thrown on the rates, they would have to go miles over to the City for admission to the Union workhouse. When the matter was looked at from the point of view of £ s. d. it could not be entertained for a moment. The Bill was simply a selfish attempt to throw responsibility upon others. He should vote for the rejection of the Bill, and he hoped when the House had heard the case for its opponents, they would say that no Bill like that would ever be brought forward with any chance of success.

*SIR EDWARD CLARKE supported the Bill. He said he believed he should be able to show that the constituents of the hon. Member for Southwark could be amply protected by the

Committee to whom he hoped the House would send this Bill. Not only had he heard no objection to the principle of the Bill, but, in what had been said by the hon. and learned Member for Bethnal Green, he found a full justification and defence of the Bill. The hon. Member appealed to the Members for Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham not to force on London what they would not like done in the case of those places. But year after year large areas were added to those cities, and last year, to the borough he himself represented, it added, by a private Bill, a considerable area of population and rateable value. On what ground? Because there was an existing form of government extending over the municipal area into which the inhabitants of those districts outside wished to go to get the benefits of that government, and of association with a large municipal corporation. If Parliament had, against the will of outlying districts, insisted on extending the area of municipal corporations in order to get a larger strength and efficiency of municipal government, *à fortiori* it should do so when the outside district wanted to come within the area. It seemed to him that this was a very ungracious opposition. Knowing a good deal of the locality, he thought there was a very strong desire on the part of a large majority of people in the district to be associated with the great City to which in many respects they belonged, and with which they had an historic and most interesting connection. This Bill was the result of the spontaneous action of the people of the district, who asked to be admitted to the advantages of association with the Corporation, and the Corporation had unanimously approved the request. Moreover, this was not an ordinary case of an area outside a corporation desiring to be added to it, and the corporation being willing to receive it. There was something more than that—namely, that for nearly 350 years there had been a considerable and close connection between Southwark and the City of London. His hon. Friend, to his horror, had scoffed at the idea of a charter of 350 years ago. [*Opposition cheers.*] He could quite understand it from the opposite side, but there were many of them who believed in the value of charters, and who thought that many old charters had been quite as beneficial to the communities to which they had applied as had been many Acts of Parliament. ["Hear, hear!"] There was 350 years ago this charter, by which Southwark was intended to have been annexed to the City of London. Since that time the City of London, which had large estates in Southwark, had drawn revenues from those estates, which were used to the great advantage of Southwark as well as of the City. The City appointed a bailiff for Southwark, it appointed a coroner for Southwark, it held Court Leet by its Recorder within Southwark, and there had been some—he agreed very imperfect—approaches to corporate life between Southwark and the City of London. If this had been the case of one of our large towns he believed no one would have complained, but directly they touched on the City of London, and there was an opportunity of the London County Council circulating a statement against the Bill, then a great deal of strong feeling seemed to be aroused. The Corporation of the City of London over and over again had been spoken of with disrespect and dislike, because it was said that the advantages of its great possessions and great administrative establishments were confined to so small an area; but now, when the Corporation was prepared to share these advantages with the people of Southwark who desired them, the cry was raised, "Do not let these people ally themselves." Why was that? Was it because it was thought that it would make the City of London stronger, in view of future arrangements of the government of London? It might be that; but considering that the City of London had not confined the advantages of its great wealth to its own area, but had expended that wealth in ways by which places lying outside its boundaries had greatly advantaged, it was an ungracious thing to attempt to refuse, to those who desired it, the opportunity of associating themselves with the City of London. It was said that the river was the natural division between Southwark and the City of London, and that if they carried the City across the river they would have boundaries which it would be difficult to define or observe. He did not understand that objection, because the boundaries between the City of London and the County Council's administration were of precisely the same character as would be found in Southwark. Apart from the Tower Bridge, on which the Corporation had spent over a million of money, besides spending six thousand a year on its maintenance, there were three great bridges—the London, Southwark, and Blackfriars Bridges—which were policed, repaired, and maintained by the City of London. It seemed to him that it would be an advantage if the approaches to those bridges from the other side were under the same control. The hon. Member for Bethnal Green had said that by Clause 10 the charters of the City were to be enforced with respect to the added area, and asked who knew what these charters were. The answer was very simple. The charters of the City had existed for centuries; and it was because the people on the south side of London knew that its government was most effective and admirable that they wished to come within its area. Then it was said that there would be river police patrolling between the two sides of the Thames, and that that would interpose an obstacle between the administration of the police on one side or the other of the river. The hon. Member for Bethnal Green must have been in sore straits for an argument before he made such a suggestion as that. With regard to the complaint that the Local Government Board would be ousted by Section 12 of this Bill from its authority, he would refer the hon. Member to Section 45 of the Bill. Although the effect of the Bill would be to make a sort of immediate order for carrying it into effect, the powers of the Local Government Board would remain absolutely unaffected by the terms of the Bill. The Bill was opposed by the three hon. Gentlemen who represented the three divisions into which was now separated the borough of Southwark, which, some years ago, he had the honour of representing for a short time. ["Hear, hear!"] A very small portion of each of those three constituencies would be added to the City of London by the Bill, and while the inhabitants of those portions of the constituencies wished to join the City —[*cries of* "No, no!" *and* "Hear, hear!"]—the inhabitants of the larger portion of each constituency were naturally afraid that their burdens of local taxation would be increased by the Bill. Hence the opposition to the Bill of those three hon. Members. Apart from the question of rating, he believed that his action in supporting the Bill more completely and accurately represented the inclinations of the people of Southwark than the opposition of his hon. Friends; but, in regard to the question of rating he agreed that his hon. Friends had a sound case. ["Hear, hear!"] He was, however, sure that there would be no objection on the part of the promoters of the Bill to insert in Committee such clauses as might compensate the districts represented by his hon. Friends for any loss it might be proved they would sustain by being deprived of a valuable rateable area. But he thought the idea that Bermondsey and Rotherhithe would lose £15,000 a year could not be sustained by figures. He hoped, therefore, that the persons who, dealing with their own interests, asked to be allowed to carry out this union, would not be prevented by the House when they were willing to take such steps as would prevent any injury to others in the process.

MR. CAUSTON said he would like to ask his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Plymouth where he got his information that the overwhelming majority of the people of the districts affected desired union with the City of London. In West Southwark, which he had the honour of representing, public opinion was entirely opposed to the Bill. Petitions in favour of the Bill were got up and signed before the drafting of the Bill was completed, when those who signed were, of course, ignorant of its details. After the publication of the Bill a public meeting, called in its favour and organised by Mr. Kelly—a gentleman with whose name the House was familar —was held at the Bridge House Hotel, at which the Chairman of St. Saviour's District Board of Works presided. A resolution in favour of the Bill was proposed, but the meeting decided by 34 votes to 14 that the Bill should be opposed. On the other hand, after the Bill had been for some time before the public and its proposals had been carefully studied, a very largely attended public and representative meeting was held at the Temperance Hall, Blackfriars, as the St. Saviour's Commissioners had refused to grant the use of the Baths for the purpose. He presided at that meeting, he should say there were about 700 persons present, and a resolution in opposition to the Bill was unanimously passed. His hon. and learned Friend said that the desire for union was spontaneous on the part of the parishes of Southwark. A petition in favour of the Bill which had been circulated through Southwark stated that all the costs, charges and expenses incidental to the Bill would be paid by the Corporation of London, so that the Measure was really the outcome of a laudable desire on the part of the Corporation of London, and he could not say that the matter had been approached in a manner satisfactory to those who were in favour of good local self-government. As Member for West Southwark he was absolutely opposed to the Bill, on the ground that it was a tinkering piecemeal proposal of London local government reform. ["Hear, hear!"] While it would be of no benefit to the parishes proposed to be included in the City, it would be grossly unfair to the parishes of Newington and St. George-the-Martyr. ["Hear, hear!"] His hon. and learned Friend had denied that it was a disfranchising Bill. At the present moment the District Board of St. Olave's and St. Saviour's were elected by the vestries, which were elected by the occupiers, and the lodger, women, and service franchise voters; but under the Bill only the occupiers would be entitled to vote for the Common Council. Therefore, under the Bill a large number of voters who elected the vestries would be deprived of this district control over local affairs. The Borough Market, which could not be better controlled than at present, would be handed over to the Corporation of London, when no doubt the expense of its management would be increased, and its benefits to St. Saviour's diminished. Another point which had been ignored by his hon. and learned Friend was that the additional charge on the parishes of St. George-the-Martyr and Newington, consequent on St. Saviour's union being deprived of some of its richest parishes, would amount to a sum equal to a rate of 3d. in the pound. His hon. and learned Friend had also declared that the desire for the Bill was great; but even the Court of Aldermen had presented a petition against the Bill, and asked the House of Commons to throw it out. The magistrates of the Newington district had also passed a resolution strongly in opposition to the Bill, and other petitioners against it were—the Governors and Guardians of the Poor of St. Mary, Newington; the Vestry of Bermondsey; the Guardians of the Poor of the St. Saviour's Union; St. Olave District Board of Works; Vestry of St. George-the-Martyr, Southwark; Vestry of Rotherhithe; City of London Union Guardians of the Poor; Guardians of the Poor of St. Olave's Union; and London County Council. Then there was the opposition of the London County Council. [*Ironical cheers.*] The County Council must occasionally be right, and there was very little difference within the Council to offering opposition to this Bill. He appealed to the right hon. Member for Croydon, who had been much associated with London reform, to oppose the Bill in the interests of good local government and of common sense. The question should be considered apart from party politics. The two parishes included in the Bill apparently desired to join the City of London. But they only expressed that wish through the vestries, and without any appeal having been made to them on the Bill. He hoped the House would save the opponents of the Measure the trouble and expense of appearing in the Committee rooms.

MR. LAFONE rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put," but Mr. Speaker withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

Debate resumed.

MR. EDMUND BOULNOIS (Marylebone, E.) said that his name appeared on the Bill, but he had no connection with the City or with Southwark. To say that the Court of Aldermen and the Guardians of the City of London Union were petitioning against the Bill was rather misleading. They were petitioning merely to obtain a *locus* before the Committee. Already, to some extent, Southwark was under the jurisdiction of the City; already they had an Alderman, though not an elected Alderman; but naturally the people of Southwark objected to dual control—to being under the City for some purposes and under the County Council for other purposes. He was not surprised that they sought to escape from the latter jurisdiction. There were many precedents for the proposed amalgamation. Farringdon, Cripplegate, Bishopsgate, Aldersgate, were all cases in point;

and as late as 1885, in connection with the Tower Bridge Bill, the City took over a portion of the adjoining district. The opposition to this Bill on the part of the County Council was comprehensible, and consistent with all the aims and desires which had always been for the amalgamation of the City with the rest of London. This Bill had very likely put an end to anything in that direction. Southwark itself was not so large as to desire a charter of incorporation for itself, and, therefore, it naturally wished to come under the wing of the great Corporation of London. He believed that the solution of the great problem of London government was to be found in the creation of separate municipalities; and where the geographic and other conditions were suited, Parliament should encourage any movement in that direction. The whole question was clearly one of boundaries, and he hoped a Commission would soon be appointed to settle these important boundary questions. Southwark had a moral right to join the City, and the House was not a proper place to discuss the details of the scheme. Of course, clauses could be inserted in Committee to prevent the excluded portions of Southwark being made poorer by the Bill.

*Captain NORTON (Newington, W.) said that he could claim to hold a mandate from almost every elector in his constituency to offer to this Bill a vigorous opposition. They thought that it had been conceived in fraud and born in secrecy. [*Laughter.*] Not one per cent. of those affected by the Bill had ever seen it or knew anything about it till it was in print. Not five per cent. of the inhabitants of the whole district knew anything about the Bill until two or three weeks ago, when public meetings were held to protest against it, and then many electors came forward to say that when they signed the petition for the Bill they were completely ignorant of what its results would be. He protested against the Measure as overriding the principle laid down in the Equalisation of Rates Act, that all in a great community should share alike in the support of the poor. Southwark had been at the gates of the City for centuries, but the Corporation had never come forward to take it under its *ægis.* It had, rather, used it as a human dustheap, for shooting the poor whom it had driven out of its own boundaries. A huge bribe had been offered to the people of Southwark by representing that certain services now performed by the County Council would be in future performed by the Corporation, and paid for out of the Corporation Estates. But those estates were not now so flourishing that Southwark could hope for much from them. The result of the Bill would be that the poor of Southwark would have to go two miles to get their wants relieved by the City poor authorities, and they would lose all control of their own Poor Rates. Then, as to the police, there was no natural boundary to divide the included parishes from the rest of Southwark; and, as one elector had said, it would take two constables to arrest a man. As the Justices of the Newington Division had said, not only a complete reorganisation of the police, but a new local police court would have to be established. Taking that point of view, there was a good deal to be said against the Bill. Lastly, there was a point which had not been touched upon at all, which must seriously affect those whom he represented—namely, the question of the tramways. When these tramways were handed over to the County Council the advantages of such transfer would be lost to the people of Southwark, and they would have one portion of the tramway under the jurisdiction of the City of London and the other under that of the County Council. He represented, perhaps, the greater proportion of the printers of London. There was a time when these men's forefathers lived wholly within the City. They were now driven without the City, and they were now to have an extra rate placed upon them through no fault of their own. If there was one thing he protested against more than another, it was making radical changes for no definite purpose, and making them in the interests of one small selfish portion of a great area. Of course, he did not deny that a small number of individuals, who owned warehouses lining the banks of the Thames, were most anxious to be included in the Bill; but the great bulk of the population, and especially those whom he represented, strongly objected to it.

Mr. J. CUMMING MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe) said that as his constituency were very materially interested indeed, he was bound to say a few words about the Measure. The portion of the constituency close to London Bridge—the portion which was covered with large buildings and immense wharves—would, if the Bill passed into law, be relieved of a certain amount of rates; naturally that portion was in favour of the Bill. On the other hand, of the large population, the working men who went to work on those wharves and in those warehouses, the great majority lived in Rotherhithe, and, if the Bill passed, their rates would be increased, and they were a great deal too high already. He would oppose this Bill to the end; and if, by doing so, he jeopardised his future position as Member for Rotherhithe, he must accept the consequences.

Mr. R. B. HALDANE (Haddington) regarded this Bill as having far more than a local character, and expressed his surprise that the Government, and not one Department of it only, but two Departments, should give the House no guidance and advice while large powers were being taken out of their hands by a private Bill. If this Bill became law it would subtract from the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Police a very large area of the metropolis, and hand it over to the City Police; that was to say, it would take it from under the Home Office and place it under another authority altogether. The County Council for once was placed in a happy position. It got an Exchequer contribution to maintain the police in this region which was sought to be transferred. The Bill made no provision for taking away that contribution, and the result was, as he calculated, that the County Council would get £7,000 a year for doing nothing. As regarded the Local Government Board, it was one of the functions of that Department to look after the arrangement of parishes in the metropolis as all over England. The Board arranged them into unions. But Section 30 of the Bill took all the parishes of the area in question out of the hands of the Local Government Board, disjoined them from their existing arrangements, and transferred them to another union altogether. The effect was astounding. The unfortunate pauper at present in Southwark would, for the future, have to go from the south of London across the bridges all the way to Smithfield, there to get the relief he now obtained somewhere near his own door. Again, the Bill took the whole of this region out of the jurisdiction of the metropolitan magistrates and transferred it, for civil and criminal purposes, to the City aldermen. Not only that, but if the Bill became law it would leave the district in this situation—that, should a fire occur there would be no authority from the City or from the other parts of London which could enter and put it out. The same was true of technical education. There would be no technical education authority in this area if the Bill passed, because the County Council would be deprived of its powers, and the City would have no equivalent powers. So with regard to the law which regulates buildings in London. The truth was, this was a carelessly-drawn Bill. And it was more. It interfered to a large extent with the existing powers of the Government, and it was matter of astonishment no Member of the Government should have risen and explained why it was they were prepared to allow powers of their own to be taken away which existed under the general system of law now on the Statute-book. Reference had been made to the alleged great advantage of this Bill, that it would be a precedent for the splitting-up of the metropolis into smaller municipalities. That was an interesting declaration, but the importance was, that it was made in the teeth of every Royal Commission that had sat on the subject, the recommendation being that this should be done, if at all, as part of a general scheme, and not piecemeal. The hon. and learned Gentleman made a most extraordinary declaration. He said that the City Ancient exercised jurisdiction over all this area. He wondered whether his hon. and learned Friend had been at the pains, as he had been, to find out what the area was which was to be transferred to the City? If his hon. Friend referred to the old records, and particularly to the second Report made in 1836, by the Royal Commission on Municipal Boroughs in England, he would find this question of area dealt with, and he would find a map showing what was the old area belonging to the City. So far from this being the area dealt with in the Bill, it was a different area. He admitted that a part of it was included, but the Bill proposed, at the same time, to pick out of the centre of this area a part which it suited the City to take, to leave out a part, and then to include a part which was never in the jurisdiction of the City at any time—the Liberty of the Fleet and the parish of Christchurch. The Bill excluded the parish of St. George-the-Martyr, which was part of the City, and which this time the City did not take because it was a poor part. Indeed, the Bill altered the whole basis of Local Government in the district; it gave it a different franchise; it transferred it from a cheap and economical system of administration to a dearer system; it transferred tramways to the City, whereas at present it had not an inch of tramway in its jurisdiction; it transferred the Government of the district to the Commissioners of Sewers, a body which the City were seeking to abolish, and proposed to place it under the Court of Common Council, whose franchise was different from that of the vestries; and it cut about the local Government of the Metropolis, in respect of area, in a way which no other Measure presented to Parliament had attempted. What was proposed should be done as part of a general scheme, and as a public Measure.

Sir J. BLUNDELL MAPLE (Camberwell, Dulwich) opposed the Bill. Generally speaking, he was opposed to the majority of the London County Council, but in the present case thought this was a Measure which the House ought, for the present, to refuse. It was absurd that the City of London should seek to come across the Thames, and to annex a portion of Southwark to the City. He should like to hear from the President of the Local Government Board what effect the Bill would have on other parts of London. It unsettled all the Metropolitan areas, all their system of Local Government, Police, County Council Elections, the apportionment of rates, and School Board divisions. [*Cries of* "No!"]. Those were important questions, and to include them in a private Bill was absurd. All these questions were of great importance, and should not be brought within the scope of a private Bill. The Bill, no doubt, was brought forward to serve some interest. There were, in his opinion, two interests to be served. First of all, there were certain payers of rates in Southwark who would like to come under the Corporation of the City of London, and, secondly, the Corporation of the City would like to say they were willing to take their poorer brethren across the Thames under their charge. This was an entirely new feature. He hoped that the Bill would be viewed by the House from a wide standpoint; but he thought that it was not required in the interests of London itself. It was opposed by the London County Council, and he believed that it would be a bad precedent to allow the City of London to pick out certain portions of the Metropolis and to leave other portions to look after themselves.

The SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. T. W. Russell, Tyrone, S.) said a direct appeal had been made to the Local Government Board to state what their views were on this Bill. It had been pointed out that in one part of the Bill certain duties now devolving on the Local Government Board were taken away. But in another part of the Bill certain duties that did not now devolve on the Local Government Board were placed upon it; and in matters of that kind the Local Government Board were in the hands of Parliament. There was, however, one portion of the Bill which peculiarly affected the Local Government Board. The Bill proposed to take two parishes out of two unions—St. Saviour's and St. Olave's—and to transfer them to the City of London. In the parishes of St. Saviour's and St. Olave's there were a great many poor; in the City of London there were very few. It was hardly correct to say that the ratepayers of these parishes desired to be transferred to the City of London, because that view would be open to the charge that their direct interest as ratepayers was involved in the change. The real question which the Local Government Board had to consider was this. These parishes which were proposed to be transferred were the richest parishes in the two unions, and to take these parishes from them would be to leave the rest of the Union in a very critical state indeed. It was all the more serious because, as the hon. Member for Bermondsey said, the Local Government Board had been insisting within the last six months upon the erection of a new workhouse by this very Union of St. Olave's. He thought his hon. Friend had overestimated the cost, but still it would be a considerable sum, amounting to £80,000 or £100,000. The important matter in the Bill from the point of view of the Local Government Board was that there was no adjustment of liabilities clauses in it. That was a very serious drawback to the Bill, and it would be for the House to consider whether the offer made by the hon. and learned Member for Plymouth to insert these adjustment clauses in Committee was a settlement of the point that could be accepted. So far as the Government was concerned, those were the views that were held on those points that concerned the Local Government Board. It would be for the House to decide on its own responsibility whether the Bill should go to the Committee upstairs.

MR. LEONARD COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin) said his hon. Friend the Secretary to the Local Government Board had responded in some measure to the appeal made to him, but no more imperfect reply could well be conceived. [*Opposition cheers.*] His hon. Friend had treated the problem as if it were wholly wrapped up in the adjustment of liabilities between the unions, but the burden of the appeal which was made by the hon. Member for Haddington was as to what view the Government took of this Bill as affecting the question of the government of London. The whole question of the government of London was wrapped up in this Bill, and what were the views of the Government on the question? He ventured to say that, whatever their policy was in respect to the future government of London, they must have some view in regard to this Bill. If confined to what it proposed, the Bill was in itself a comparatively small one. It was an extension Bill, said his hon. and learned Friend, fortified by innumerable instances from other municipalities in the country. Other municipalities had brought in extension Bills, no doubt, to extend what was the nucleus of a town so as to correspond to what it had increased to. This Bill was not brought in in that fashion. It was brought in by a small outlying portion desiring to be annexed to the City of London. If the City of London had met its obligations some years ago there might very possibly now be an extended City of London so as to cover the whole municipal area, and it might rise to that height even now. They might conceive the City of London extending over the whole area, or they might conceive the County Council coming in to cover the City. In either case this Bill was not put forward in relation to that great problem. It offered no suggestion to its solution; it was, instead, a bar to it. [*Opposition cheers.*] The suggestion was something of this kind—they had got a rich area, and outside it rich and poor areas, and the comfortable, rich area was to be included, leaving the poor parts attached to the same area to take care of themselves. [*Opposition cheers.*] Did any municipality ever bring in a Bill of that kind, and did Parliament ever consent to support a Bill of that kind? The Bill was not consistent even with the proposal to create independent municipalities. It was a minor extension proposed with the faint hope, really most innocently suggested by the hon. Member for Marylebone, that thereby the City would become so strong that it might be able to withstand all attempts upon it for the future. Even if the strength of the City were increased to this extent, it would still be but feebleness if that was all it could rely upon. [*Opposition cheers.*] This was a question which concerned the future government of London. Had the Imperial Government any policy for that? If it had any policy, it must have a view with relation to this Bill, and he ventured to say that, whatever policy they had adopted—if they had adopted any, and he dared say they had—they must have some opinion in regard to this Bill in relation to that policy. This Bill touched a great question—not a question confined to the particular area now proposed to be dealt with, but the great question of the Government of all London, the question that Parliament had always reserved to itself and refused to allow to go to a Private Bill Committee. ["Hear, hear!"] He confessed to a strong opinion that this Bill ought not to be supported as a private Bill, but that it was a great public question which should be dealt with, if at all, by a public Bill.

MR. ALBAN GIBBS (City of London) said this Bill was not promoted by the City of London. The City had adopted it for the simple reason that they were asked to do so by the particular body promoting it. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bodmin intimated that the City ought to have extended itself over the whole metropolis. He did not know whether the City wished to do that, but certainly he did not wish to see them do it. He wished to see moderate-sized municipalities which grew naturally, and when an outside body wished to come into such a municipality he thought it should be allowed to do so. It was for that reason he supported this Bill. The only other argument brought forward was with reference to the financial liabilities. The hon. Member for Plymouth had stated that the promoters were prepared to put in clauses to settle that question properly. He thought the House should accept that promise as far as the Second Reading was concerned, and then, when the Bill came back from the Committee, if the clauses were not satisfactory to the House, it was open to the House to reject the Bill on the Third Reading. He thought the House would do very wrong if they did not allow the Bill to go to a Committee.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said that what they wanted to know was the view of the Government as to whether matters affecting the administration of the Local Government Board ought to be dealt with in a private Bill. The Secretary to the Local Government Board, in his statement, only touched on one point which, however important in itself, was only a matter of detail. He thought they were entitled to a reply to the question as to what the Government's view was with regard to the transference of a certain district from the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Police under the Home Office to the jurisdiction of the police under the Corporation? He would like to ask the President of the Local Government Board—in the absence of the Home Secretary—whether he did not think this transference of power would lead to many matters of difficulty between the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Police and the jurisdiction of the police under the Corporation? Further, they had a right to ask the Government whether they thought it right and expedient that a considerable number of the citizens of the metropolis should be transferred from the jurisdiction of stipendiary magistrates under the Home Office to the jurisdiction of the amateur magistrates of the Corporation of London. They were also entitled to know what the Government's opinion was with regard to the disfranchising clauses of the Bill, and the dealing with the government of the metropolis in this piecemeal fashion. Surely if it were desired to take in hand the splitting up of the metropolis into minor municipalities it ought to be done after due consideration and by means of a public Bill. ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. COHEN rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put, but Mr. Speaker withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

Debate resumed.

*Mr. W. O. CLOUGH (Portsmouth) denied that the City Corporation were advancing money for the promotion of the Bill. The promoters of the Measure had subscribed no less a sum than £3,000 towards the expenses of its promotion. Who were those promoters? They had heard from the hon. Member for Southwark that part of his constituency were in favour of the Bill. The Corporation did not approach Southwark or any of the parishes concerned. Those parishes approached the Corporation. An hon. Member below him had said the Court of Aldermen had petitioned against the Bill. There was a good answer to that statement, namely that they presented a petition in order to obtain a *locus standi.* So long ago as 1895 the Vestries of St. Saviour, St. Olave, St. Thomas, and St. John, Horselydown, presented a petition to the Court of Common Council, praying that they might be admitted to the Corporation. The petition was referred to the Court of Aldermen, and they recommended that the prayer be granted, and the Lord Mayor referred the matter to the Court of Common Council. It was Southwark who approached the Corporation, and not the Corporation Southwark. The guardians were not unanimous by any means in their opposition to the Bill, and it was abundantly proved that the ratepayers in what was described in the Bill as the added area, were in favour of the Measure. It was true the Bill might have the effect, as stated by the hon. Member for Bermondsey, of increasing the rates in one part of his division; but on the whole the City of London had nothing whatever to gain by the financial arrangement which it was proposed should be made. The rating in the future would practically be left what it was now, and the City would have to pay the same as now. In many parishes the rates would be substantially reduced, but as regarded the City of London it would not be a gainer, though he did not think it would be a loser, by the inclusion of the parishes.

*MR. J. LOWLES (Shoreditch, Haggerston) thought that one of the strongest arguments in favour of the Bill was that a long neglected duty which should have been fulfilled by the London County Council with regard to the southern approaches to the Tower Bridge would be fulfilled by the City of London. While a large sum of money was spent by the Corporation of the City upon the Tower Bridge, the southern approaches to that fine structure had been left in a disgraceful condition owing to the divided counsels of the County Council. As to population, it had been said the City was constantly pouring its poor outside. It was quite a mistake, as the City had within its area the best built and best managed artisans dwellings that could be seen in London. He did not anticipate any difficulty from the point of view of the tramways or the police, and as to wharfage frontage, he asserted that if there was one duty which the City had discharged to the satisfaction of everybody, it was that of sanitary authority. The Bill would put under the control of the Corporation a large amount of wharfage, but he was quite certain they would administer the affairs of the wharves on the southern side of the river in the same satisfactory way they administered the wharves on the northern side. It had also been urged against the Bill that the poor would have to walk to Smithfield to get relief. He had not the least doubt that the Guardians would make some provision so that they could administer relief on the spot. On the general question he admitted that he regarded the Measure as an instrument towards the establishment of separate municipalities in the metropolis, towards which end he was sure both sides of politics were tending.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) appealed to the Government to give them some direction as to the Bill, which dealt with the future government of the metropolis. He did not go as far as some hon. Members with regard to the government of the metropolis, but unless Ministers were prepared to give the House some information the Debate ought to be adjourned. [" Hear, hear! "] The Chairman was absent from the House, which would have been natural if the Government had been going to give them some direction. But they had no inkling of what the Government view was, and when the hon. Member (Mr. Russell) sat down he left them in doubt as to the way in which he would vote. The hon. Member expressed the strongest disapproval of one portion of the Bill, but he did not express any approval of the other parts of the Bill.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said he had no wish to travel outside his own department.

*SIR C. DILKE said that was his case. The hon. Member was the only Member of the Government who had spoken, and he confined himself to one particular point. He had given the House no opinion for or against the Bill. He did not take the technical objection that this ought to have been a public Bill, but there could be no doubt as to the importance of the Bill as to the future government of London. It was impossible to pass the Second Reading, however, without some guidance from the Government. [" Hear, hear! "] Surely in a matter which involved the breaking up of the control of the police, as this Bill did, and the Home Secretary having left the House, they ought to have the opinion of the Government.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. HENRY CHAPLIN, Lincolnshire, Sleaford) said, he understood the right hon. Gentleman to complain that the reply of his hon. Friend was inadequate and imperfect.

*SIR C. DILKE: I am not complaining of the reply, for it was no reply. [" Hear, hear! "]

MR. CHAPLIN said he had heard the remarks of his hon. Friend, and he thought them perfectly appropriate to the occasion. [*A laugh.*] It could not be expected that on a private Bill he should go into the question of a great policy. He thought that his hon. Friend exercised a wise discretion. [*Cries of* " Oh, oh! "] As to what was to happen to the police, that was a matter more for the Home

Office than for the Local Government Board. Hon. Members knew that the Home Office would have to make a Report on this Bill, precisely as the Local Government Board would have to report, and those matters would be dealt with on that occasion. This was a private Bill, discussed at great length by the House, and the House, having heard all the arguments that could be adduced, was perfectly in a position to come to a decision for itself. [*Laughter.*] He thought the House could arrive at that decision without any assistance so far as he was concerned.

MR. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton), who was met with cries of "Divide," said they were being called upon without any advice from the Government to vote for a Bill which, if it be passed, would materially affect the question of London government. The right hon. Gentleman said that was a private Bill, but surely that was no reason why he should back out of the responsibility which devolved upon him. ["Hear, hear!"] Had the Government, or had it not, an attitude on this question of the future government of London? The last election was largely fought on that point, and if the Government were not prepared with a scheme it was their duty to stop the Bill, which must entangle any solution they might choose to offer.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said he should certainly vote for the Bill, but he regretted that the Government had not thought it proper to give some distinct statement. London was very keen on this great subject, and it should be borne in mind that the London Members formed a large proportion of the majority which supported the Government. ["Hear, hear!"] He thought it was not too much to expect that the Government would give the House some idea of their views. He regretted extremely that they were left in the dark.

Question put:—The House divided:—Ayes, 169; Noes, 187.—(Division List, No. 138.)

Words added.

Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to.

Second Reading put off for six months.

President of the Local Government Board.

QUESTIONS.

PARIS INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION.

SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE (Exeter): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he can state the amount of money proposed to be granted by the German Government towards the cost of German exhibits at the Paris Exhibition in 1900?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. GEORGE CURZON, Lancashire, Southport): The German Government has included a preliminary grant of 50,000 marks (£2,500) in the Budget for 1897-8; the total expenditure is at present calculated at 5,000,000 marks (£250,000) to be distributed over the Budgets of the three succeeding years.

SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the total amount of the grant proposed by Her Majesty's Government towards the expenses of the British Exhibitors' Section in the Paris International Exhibition of 1900?

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir MICHAEL HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): Having considered the expenditure on the British exhibitors' section at other important international exhibitions, we think that £75,000 should amply suffice for the expenses of the British exhibitors' section in the Paris International Exhibition of 1900.

METROPOLITAN POLICE.

MR. E. H. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether instructions are given to the Metropolitan Police that, when a constable has a warrant to arrest, or is about to arrest, a person on his own authority, or has a person in custody for a crime, it is wrong to question such person touching the crime of which he is accused?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY, Lancashire, Blackpool): Yes, Sir; such are the general instructions given to the police, but it is obviously impossible to prohibit all questioning before arrest. Any questions, however, which would approach to the holding out an inducement to the person to make a confession are prohibited altogether.

*CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will consider the advisability of paying the boot money to the members of the Metropolitan Police Force in two payments of 13s. yearly, instead of by weekly 6d. payments, since the proposed method of payment, coupled with the date upon which it is to commence, and the date upon which the last issue of boots is to take place, will cause each constable to lose 13s. during his term of service?

*SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: No, Sir; I am not prepared to reconsider this arrangement. There will be no such loss as the hon. Member supposes. The boots which each constable will have in his possession on the 1st October will be good for several months to come, but even if he has to buy himself a pair before his weekly allowances have reached the sum of 13s., his loss, if it can be called one, will be more than counterbalanced by his gain under another provision of the new arrangement, of which the hon. Member appears to be unaware. It is this. Under the existing order of things, the boots of a constable are not his property but the Receiver's, and on promotion or retirement he has to restore two serviceable pairs to the Receiver, or pay a sum of money which is never less than 10s. and may be a good deal more. By the new arrangement, the men will be given absolutely the boots in their possession on the 1st October, and will be relieved of the liability, which as I have explained, attaches to them on promotion or retirement. I may add that all other allowances in the Force for articles of clothing are made by weekly payments, and never by money in advance, and no hardship has ever been felt, and that the exact terms of the new arrangement were put before the men last year, who decided for it by a large majority. I am fully satisfied, as is the Commissioner, that the new arrangement is beneficial to the men, as it was intended to be.

*CAPTAIN NORTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman be prepared to take the opinion of the constables upon the point?

*SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: That is what I have done.

SCOTCH MAIL SERVICE.

MR. D. NICOL (Argyll): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether a travelling post office is to be run throughout the year between Stirling and Oban in connection with the down night mail train and the up local 4.30 p.m. from Oban; and, if so, when this arrangement is likely to come into force; and what acceleration of postal communication in the districts affected will result?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. R. W. HANBURY, Preston): The Postmaster General has frequently been urged to continue throughout the year the early morning mail trains from Stirling to Oban which runs during the three months of July, August, and September. A travelling post office is not a necessary part of the scheme, and would add to the expenditure. But if it were run in the morning train, the up local train at 4.30 would no doubt be a convenient train by which it should return to Stirling. Whether a travelling post office is included in the arrangement or not, the postal advantages as a whole are not, in the Postmaster General's judgment, sufficient to warrant the expenditure involved, and no steps have been taken towards establishing the service. If the train were established, an early delivery of the letters by two and a-half to four hours would be afforded at Oban, and at places on the line, but whether the letters for places served by the steamers from Oban would gain any advantage would depend upon re-arrangements of the steamer services, which may not be found acceptable or even practicable.

SIR LEONARD LYELL (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he is aware that the mail steamer from Aberdeen to Shetland was delayed 15 hours beyond its time at Kirkwall on Sunday 14th inst., although the weather was fine, and that in consequence great inconvenience was occasioned to the inhabitants of Shetland, owing to the delay in delivering the mails and to the consequent dislocation of the inland mail service, the people of Lerwick especially being deprived of any opportunity of communicating by post with their correspondents in the South until the following Wednesday; and whether he will institute an inquiry into the circumstances of this detention?

Mr. HANBURY: The mail steamer in question should have left Aberdeen on Friday, the 12th inst., at 7 p.m., but owing to stress of weather it could not leave till 9 p.m. on Saturday, the 13th. It arrived at Kirkwall shortly after 8 a.m. on Sunday, the 14th, but Sunday labour being prohibited at Kirkwall between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m., the cargo could not be discharged till the evening. The arrival at Lerwick was consequently delayed until 11 a.m. on Monday, but the vessel remained there until 1 a.m. on Tuesday, and the people of Lerwick had thus the opportunity of sending replies southwards by the same steamer. Many places in the country districts were also able to reply by the return steamer, as the Postmaster made special efforts to bring back the country postmen to Lerwick on Monday night.

HOUSE OF COMMONS (MEMBERS' SMOKING ACCOMMODATION).

Mr. JOHN AIRD (Paddington, N.): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works if, while arrangements are being made for an additional smoking room, Members may be allowed, after Nine o'clock, to smoke in the South Dining Room, this being immediately adjacent?

The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS (Mr. Akers-Douglas, Kent, St. Augustine's): I am informed that the Kitchen Committee have decided to adopt the suggestion of my hon. Friend, so far as to permit smoking in the South Dining Room after 9.15 p.m.; but they hope that, at periods of abnormal pressure, hon. and right hon. Gentlemen will not make use of the privilege to the obvious discomfort of non-smokers compelled to dine late.

Mr. AIRD: I beg to thank the right hon. Gentleman.

VALUATION AND BOUNDARY SURVEY (IRELAND).

Mr. JAMES DALY (Monaghan, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he is aware that the Carrickmacross Board of Guardians on 5th January this year wrote to the officer of the Valuation and Boundary Survey of Ireland protesting against a valuation made by their revising officer, reducing the valuation of premises from £39 10s. to £26, grabbed by a man named Kenny in the town of Carrickmacross; (2) whether he is aware that the previous tenant, Mr. Phelan, who was evicted, improved these premises so much that the valuation during his time was increased from £35 to £39 10s.; also that the present tenant swore at Castleblaney Quarter Sessions in October last that he was paying £35 per annum, same rent as the evicted tenant; and, if so, why a reduction in the valuation; (3) whether he can give the name of the officer who made this valuation, and if he is the same person who increased the valuation on the previous tenant; and (4) if the Valuation and Boundary Survey Department gave any instructions in this case; and, if so, what were they?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. Gerald Balfour, Leeds, Central): The revision of the valuation of the premises referred to was made in 1893, when the valuation was reduced to £26, following deterioration of the buildings, which are very old. No objection was made at the time by the Board of Guardians, but early this year they requested that the valuation should be restored to its original amount. An investigation by a second Valuer, and subsequently by the Chief Valuer of the Department, confirmed the result arrived at by the First Valuer, who reduced the valuation. It is the fact, I understand, that in 1880, when Mr. Phelan, the former tenant, and who is now, I believe, the Chairman of the Board of Guardians, was in occupation of the premises, the valuation was increased from £36 10s. to £39 10s. The present occupier is liable for a rent of £35, the landlord maintaining the premises and paying the taxes. None of the three Valuers who reported in favour of the reduced valuation is the officer who increased the valuation in 1880. I see no reason for stating the name of any of these officers. The reply to the last paragraph is in the negative. It was open to the Guardians to appeal against the decision of the Commissioner of Valuation in this case, and they were so informed on the 21st January last, but no steps were taken by them in this direction, and the statutory time for appealing has now lapsed.

Mr. DALY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a large amount of correspondence has passed between the Valuation and Boundary Survey of Ireland and the Carrickmacross Board of Guardians regarding reductions recently made by the revising valuer on the town property of Mr. Shirley, Carrickmacross; whether he is aware that the Carrickmacross Board of Guardians have protested against the reduction made on the property mentioned; also that other landlords in this town have had to object to increases put upon their buildings by same valuer; and whether he can say if the Valuation and Boundary Survey of Ireland gave their revising valuer any special instructions regarding the Shirley property in arriving at his decision; and, if so, can he state what they were?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: A large amount of correspondence has passed between the Carrickmacross Board of Guardians and the Valuation Office regarding a valuation reduced in 1893, and the Guardians have protested against the same, though they have not appealed to the Courts as they might have done if dissatisfied. I am not aware of any general protest against the valuations made in this Union, but the fact that there has not been a single appeal against any of these during the past three years would seem to show that they have been equitable. No special instructions were given to any of the valuers who were revising in this Union.

POOR LAW OFFICERS (PENSIONS).

Mr. T. G. ASHTON (Beds, Luton): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the information in the possession of the Local Government Board shows that the contributions from salaries of Poor Law Officers under the Poor Law Officers' Superannuation Act, 1896, will suffice, or almost suffice, to pay the pensions under the Act; whether his attention has been called to the calculations made by Mr. Thomas Fatkin, an expert, at the request of the Leeds Board of Guardians, and adopted by them on 13th January last, which calculations show that the contributions of the officers will barely suffice to pay one-third of the cost of the pensions under the Act; and whether, having regard to the fact that a Bill is before the House to extend the provisions of the Act to the officers and servants of other local authorities, he will consider the advisability of having actuarial calculations made out to determine what proportion of the cost of the pensions is likely to fall on the ratepayers in the event of the Bill becoming law?

The SECRETARY to the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. T. W. Russell, Tyrone, S.): The Local Government Board have no definite information as to how far the contributions from salaries of Poor Law officers under the Poor Law Officers' Superannuation Act, will suffice to pay the allowances under that Act. But it is to be borne in mind that in the great majority of cases of officers to which the Act refers, the Guardians, prior to the passing of the Act, were empowered to award superannuations without any contributions from the officers. The Act has conferred upon the officers the right to a superannuation, instead of its being optional with the Guardians to grant superannuations as was previously the case as regards all officers who devoted their whole time to their duties, it being at the same time made obligatory on the officers to whom the Act applies to contribute a percentage of their salaries towards the cost of superannuation. The Board have seen the communication which Mr. Fatkin has addressed to the Leeds Board of Guardians, but cannot undertake to have made the actuarial calculations suggested in the last question, and, looking to the thousands of authorities to which the Bill refers, the Local Government Board do not think there are any data on which any actuarial calculations which could be relied upon could be made.

BOARD SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS.

Colonel DALBIAC (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether it is obligatory upon School Boards in crowded urban districts to build around each school playground a wall of sufficient height to prevent the habitual personal annoyance of residents near the school, and the constant danger to passers-by from missiles?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir JOHN GORST, Cambridge University): No, Sir; there is no such obligation, and I fear that a wall of sufficient height to prevent boys throwing stones over it would be in itself a nuisance.

CONTRABAND TOBACCO (CHELSEA HOSPITAL).

CAPTAIN NORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, seeing that of the 581 pensioners in Chelsea Hospital only eight do not use tobacco, he will consider the advisability of allotting from the contraband tobacco in the Queen's Warehouse sufficient to give to each pensioner a pipe a day, since the only objection raised, namely, the possibility of sale, may be safely disregarded owing to the extremely limited extent to which it could take place?

MR. HANBURY: The grant of seized tobacco is confined in the first instance to cases where the tobacco would otherwise be charged upon the Votes. This covers not only the Kew and Edinburgh Botanic Gardens, but also the Criminal Lunatics at Broadmoor and Dundrum, a tobacco allowance for whom used to be borne on the Votes. If a surplus of tobacco still remains over, it is given under an arrangement made in 1893 to troops going on foreign service. Such troops had always been entitled to get their tobacco duty free, and the grant therefore does not displace any duty-paid tobacco. At present, however, the issue to the troops has had to be suspended, as the supply has run short. The case of the Chelsea pensioners is, therefore, not analogous. There is no tobacco allowance for them charged on the Votes, and they are not entitled to get their tobacco duty-free. Apart from the possibility of their selling the tobacco, the hon. and gallant Member will see from what I have said that any grant made to them would be taken from troops going on foreign service.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS (RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION).

SIR FRANCIS POWELL (Wigan): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether, seeing that the present forms of agreement used in the case of Church of England schools contain clauses whereby the teachers undertake to give religious as well as secular instruction to the scholars under their charge, and that the form of agreement contained in Schedule VI. of the Code now before Parliament might well be construed to apply to secular instruction only, it is the intention of the Education Department to require the exclusion of all reference to religious instruction in the agreements between managers and teachers of Voluntary Schools?

SIR J. GORST: The Committee of Council do not consider the form of agreement given in the Code capable of the construction suggested in the Question. But it is only a model, and can be altered if managers think fit.

NORFOLK ISLAND.

MR. J. F. HOGAN (Tipperary, Mid): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in reference to the recently published Blue-book on the change of government in Norfolk Island, whether any steps have been taken, or instructions issued, to prevent the unalienated lands being snapped up by strangers at insignificant prices, having regard to the value these lands will acquire in the early future, when Norfolk Island is one of the principal stations of the Pacific Cable; whether the desire of the Norfolk Island community, as expressed at page 25, that the importation of spirituous liquors should be prohibited in the future, as it has been during the past 40 years, will be respected under the new regime; and whether, as it is expressly stated at page 33, on his authority, that the appointment of the Government Resident is a temporary measure limited to the short period of 10 months, another and a permanent scheme for the future government of Norfolk Island is now in contemplation?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): It will be seen from Sections 1 and 3 of the Order in Council of January 15, published at page 50 of the Blue-book, that the Governor of New South Wales for the time being is empowered to administer the affairs of Norfolk Island, and to constitute and appoint all necessary judges, justices of the peace, and other public officers. Any future administrative arrangements will therefore be in the hands of the Governor; and with reference to the first part of the Question, I have no doubt that under Section 5 of the Order in Council due attention will be given to all questions connected with the alienation and transfer of lands. The new regulations as to the importation of beer and spirituous liquors, which were passed by the Governor in virtue of the powers already vested in him by the Order in Council of 1856, will be found at pages 40 and 41 of the Blue-book.

RAILWAY ACCIDENTS.

MR. F. A. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether any representative of the Board of Trade was present at the inquest held on Frank Niblett, a carriage washer, who was killed at the Joint Bristol Station, on Saturday, 6th March; and whether any inquiry has been directed to be made by an inspector or sub-inspector into the circumstances, and especially into the allegation that, while shunting and carriage washing go on most of the night, there is no adequate lighting of this portion of the lines?

The HON. MEMBER also asked the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention had been called to the circumstances under which engine driver Little, of the Great Western Railway Company, met his death recently, and to the admission of the locomotive superintendent that the space between the corner of the archway where the fatality occurred and a passing engine was only about 12 to 14 inches; whether any representative of the Board of Trade was present at the inquest, or whether any local inspection or inquiry had been made or would be made by an inspector or sub-inspector of the Board; and what representations had been or would be made to the Company on the subject?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. RITCHIE, Croydon): I will answer both the Hon. Member's Questions at the same time. The Board of Trade have ordered inquiries by a sub-inspector in each case. No application was made in either case by the Coroner for the attendance of an assessor at the inquest.

MR. CHANNING: Will the inquiry take place shortly?

MR. RITCHIE: Yes.

BRITISH NEW GUINEA.

MR. HOGAN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that Sir William McGregor, Administrator of British New Guinea, has issued a proclamation forbidding Chinese to enter on any of the goldfields of that dependency until a period of three years from the first discovery of such goldfields shall have elapsed; is such a proclamation legal; and, if so, what are the reasons by which it is sought to be justified in this instance; and whether there is any precedent for such restrictive action on the part of an Administrator of an auriferous dependency?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I have not received any official information on the subject referred to in the Question.

POST OFFICE (THURLES, CO. TIPPERARY).

MR. HOGAN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether any progress has been made in the matter of providing the town of Thurles, County Tipperary, with suitable premises for the transaction of postal and telegraphic business?

MR. HANBURY: An offer of premises for a new post office at Thurles is under consideration, but it has been necessary to ask for plans to assist in arriving at a decision.

QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE (IMPERIAL STAMPS).

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether it is the intention of the Government to issue a special Imperial stamp or postage stamps to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of the Queen?

MR. HANBURY: It is not the intention of the Government to issue a special Imperial stamp or postage stamps to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of the Queen.

IRISH MAIL SERVICE.

Mr. PATRICK JOSEPH O'BRIEN (Tipperary, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether, in view of the proposed acceleration of the mail service to and from the districts in the South of Ireland, any arrangement has been come to with the Great Southern and Western Railway Company to meet the requirements of the inhabitants of Roscrea, Nenagh, and Birr, as set forth in the recent petitions forwarded from these towns to the Postmaster General on the subject; and, if not, whether steps will be taken before the new regulations come into force to make the necessary provision?

Mr. HANBURY: No arrangement has yet been come to with the Great Southern and Western Railway Company for giving effect to the wishes of the inhabitants of Roscrea, Nenagh, and Birr, as set forth in their recent petitions; and the Postmaster General cannot undertake that an improvement of the day mail service shall be provided for. All the circumstances shall, however, be very fully examined with a view to any improvement which may be practicable hereafter.

CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN INDIA.

Mr. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he will state the amount drawn annually from the taxation of India for the maintenance of Christian ecclesiastical establishments in that country; whether he can give any reasons why the charges of these churches, which exist for the benefit of the English community, should be borne by the taxpayers of India; and whether, in view of the strain now put upon Indian finances by the famine, he will consider the advisability of devoting the money referred to to purposes of general service of the country?

The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Lord George Hamilton, Middlesex, Ealing): The total charge upon Indian revenues for ecclesiastical purposes was Rx. 220,000 in 1895-96, of which sum by far the greater part was spent in pay and establishments for chaplains of various denominations serving with the Army. It has for 200 years been held, and is still held by the Government of India, to be a part of their duty to provide religious ministrations, within reasonable limits, for the European Army in India, and for European civilians serving in that country. Both these classes have accepted employment in the expectation and belief that such provision would be made; and there is no intention of making any change in the present arrangements.

Mr. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield): Will a Return be granted of the details of this expenditure if asked for?

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: Yes, Sir.

FITZGERALD ESTATE (COUNTY KERRY).

Mr. M. J. FLAVIN (Kerry, N): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) if he is aware that the tenants on the Fitzgerald Estate, situate at Ballydonoghue, Tarbert, County Kerry, petitioned the Court for their usual reduction of rent, and that a communication was sent by the receiver, in reply to the petition, refusing to grant the reduction of rent asked for, on the ground that the tenants have their lands in grass; (2) whether he is aware that a great portion of their holdings is under meadowing and tillage, and that reductions were granted prior to 1896; and (3) whether, owing to the year 1896 being most disastrous to tenant farmers in produce and price, steps will be taken to make inquiries into the condition of these tenants with a view to give them a reduction in their rent as heretofore?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: I am informed that the statements in the first paragraph are substantially correct. I have no information regarding the second paragraph; and as to the third paragraph, any communication in the matter should be addressed to the Department of the Land Judge.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL (WATER SUPPLY).

Sir FREDERICK DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he has seen that, since the decision of the House was given against the London County Council acquiring the control of the water supply of London, that Council has instructed its engineer to proceed with the plans and sections of the Wye portion of the Welsh scheme, at a cost of £1,500; and whether any and what steps can be taken to prevent this expenditure of the ratepayers' money, and if the parties promoting the scheme can be surcharged by the Government or other auditor?

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Henry Chaplin, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I have ascertained that the London County Council have, subject to the passing of the Annual Maintenance Vote, assented to the expenditure referred to in the Question, and that the expenditure is considered to be authorised by Section 3 of the London Water Act, 1892. The Local Government Board have no authority to intervene to prevent the expenditure; it will, of course, devolve on the district auditor in the case of the payments referred to, as in the case of any other payments by the County Council, to consider whether the expenditure has been legally incurred.

MADAGASCAR (BRITISH GOODS).

Mr. JOSEPH A. PEASE (Northumberland, Tyneside): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the French Government are placing import duties on certain British goods entering Madagascar, whilst French goods of a similar character are imported free; if so, whether the practice is a violation of an arrangement made with the French Government in 1890; and for how long such a violation of the French obligations has been allowed to continue; and what steps Her Majesty's Government have taken to enable British trade commodities to be imported into Madagascar on terms which would be in accordance with the signed declaration of the French Government in 1890?

Mr. CURZON: Under a Decree published in the *Journal Officiel* of August 8th last, French imports are admitted into Madagascar free of duty, while foreign imports continue to be subject to the *ad valorem* duty of 10 per cent. sanctioned by previously existing Treaties. Her Majesty's Government have addressed representations to the French Government on the subject.

HAULBOWLINE DOCKYARD.

Captain DONELAN: I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that the labourers employed in the Ordnance Department at Haulbowline are only in receipt of 16s. per week; and whether the Admiralty will consider the desirability of paying these men upon the same scale as labourers employed upon similar work in other Dockyards?

*The CIVIL LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. J. Austen Chamberlain, Worcestershire, E.): The hon. and gallant Member is apparently under a misapprehension. There are no labourers employed under the Admiralty in the Ordnance Department at Haulbowline. The Question should apparently be addressed to the War Office.

CRETE.

Mr. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the proposed autonomy of Crete is to be effective in the sense that it will enable the Cretans to choose their own ruler and their own form of rule; and whether the proclamation stated to have been issued by the Admirals to the Cretans contains, or is accompanied by, a definition or explanation of the suggested autonomy?

*Mr. CURZON: The choice of a ruler and the precise form of constitution are matters for which the Great Powers have assumed the responsibility. The proclamation issued by the Admirals on the 19th inst. defines the proffered autonomy as complete autonomy subject to the suzerainty of the Sultan, and explains that Cretans will be free from all control of the Porte as regards their internal affairs. The Proclamation further states that the Powers in concert are framing regulations for the functions of the autonomous *régime* which will restore order, and will guarantee, without distinction of race or religion, liberty and security of property, and the development of the resources of the island.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): I gather from the answer of the right hon. Gentleman that the clause, which I understand was suggested by our Consul, Sir A. Biliotti, excluding the power of the Sultan, has appeared in the Proclamation. The statement has been made that the Admirals insisted upon the excision of that clause.

*Mr. CURZON: I do not think that there can be any truth in the latter report. Whether the clause was suggested by Sir A. Biliotti or not we have no official information, but inasmuch as it appears in the Proclamation in the form in which it was issued, I think we may assume that the reply must be in the affirmative.

Mr. T. C. H. HEDDERWICK (Wick Burghs): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether the Government have applied for and obtained the permission of the Sovereign of Crete to land armed forces on that island?

*Mr. CURZON: On February 15th, the date on which the Naval detachments were landed in Crete, the Turkish Foreign Minister informed Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople that the Sultan agreed to the temporary occupation by the Powers of such places in the island as the Admirals thought desirable.

Mr. J. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs a Question of which I have given him private, but at the same time adequate, notice—[*laughter*]—namely, whether it is the fact that the insurgents chiefs at Akrotiri assert that the passage in the Report of their interview with the Admirals in which it is stated that they declared themselves satisfied with autonomy is an erroneous interpretation of their words; and that in the journal in which the details of the interview are recorded it is stated that they declared unanimously in favour of union with Greece; whether the chiefs have formally notified to the Admirals that any further communication to them must be in writing; and whether Lord Salisbury will be prepared to take any, and, if so, what, measures to guard in the future against similar misconstructions and misunderstandings?

*Mr. CURZON: I am much obliged to the hon. Gentleman for his courtesy, which he has explained to the House. [*Laughter.*] In reply to the Question, I have to say that we have never heard that the insurgent chiefs at Akrotiri in their interview with the Admirals declared themselves satisfied with autonomy. In the Admirals' Report of the interview on March 10, the substance of which I have previously communicated to the House, there was no mention of any expression of opinion from the insurgents on this point. In reporting a later interview on March 19, Her Majesty's Consul mentions that the insurgents declared that nothing but annexation to Greece would satisfy them. No information has reached us as to communications by writing, nor does it appear that importance is attached thereto by the insurgents, seeing that their last interview with the Admirals on March 19 was on board one of the ships of war.

Mr. JOHN DILLON (Mayo, E.) wished to ask whether a Greek vessel had been sunk by an Austrian cruiser off the coast of Crete; and, if so, why it was sunk, in view of the fact that the blockade did not begin until yesterday?

*Mr. CURZON: It appears that on March 17 the Austrian vessel *Sebenico*, in pursuance of the notifications of the Admirals of February 15 and 27 that the landing of munitions of war would not be permitted in Crete, went to examine a schooner flying the Greek flag, which was engaged in landing supplies of ammunition on the coast near Cape Dhia. The insurgents opened heavy fire upon the *Sebenico* with rifles and cannon. The captain returned the fire, sinking the schooner and dislodging the insurgents. The crew swam ashore.

Mr. J. McLEOD (Sutherland): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether the 600 Seaforth Highlanders who have been ordered to Crete are provided with a Presbyterian chaplain; and, if not, whether he will see that such provision is made?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford): Arrangements have been made for a Presbyterian chaplain to accompany the Seaforth Highlanders, if the officer commanding should think it desirable.

Mr. McLEOD: Do I understand that it is to be left to the officer in command to decide?

Mr. BRODRICK: Yes; the officer in command has been instructed to take a

Presbyterian chaplain if he thinks it desirable.

Mr. McLEOD: Is the right hon. Gentleman not aware that the Highlanders are practically all Presbyterians. [*Laughter.*]

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member is replying to an answer to a Question.

HAMPTON COURT PARK.

Mr. T. SKEWES-COX (Surrey, Kingston): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether, having regard to the letter of the 4th December last from his office to Mr. Aston, the path will now be continued across Hampton Court Park, if the funds necessary for the purpose are contributed by residents at Surbiton?

Mr. AKERS-DOUGLAS: I have no reason to suppose that there is any public demand for the path in question, and I am of opinion that paths across the Park disfigure it, and should not be made except it can be shown that they are absolutely required.

IRISH PUBLIC WORKS (SUPPLY OF FURNITURE).

Mr. DILLON: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury (1) whether the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland have entered into a contract with a firm of furniture manufacturers at Redlands, Bristol, for a supply of office and other furniture; and (2) if so, whether he will lay upon the Table the tender of the firm, the contract, and the correspondence relating thereto?

Mr. HANBURY: The answer to the first paragraph is, Yes. I shall be glad to show the hon. Member both the tender and the contract. The correspondence I have not yet received, and I cannot, therefore, make any promise with regard to it.

LAND COMMISSION (SALE OF TENANCIES).

Mr. VESEY KNOX (Londonderry): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will call the attention of the Land Commission to the fact that in dealing with the sale of tenancies in their new rules they have dealt with all tenancies, including Ulster Custom tenancies, and have thereby exceeded their jurisdiction?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. J. Atkinson, Londonderry, N.): With the permission of my right hon. Friend, I will reply to this Question. The Rules issued by the Land Commission, dated the 2nd January 1897, are merely a recast of the Rules made under the Land Act of 1881, issued in December 1883. Both the latter and the former referred, as provided by the Statutes, to sales made under the Act of 1881. Sales under the Ulster Custom are, by the express provisions of Section 1, Subsection (12) of the Act of 1881, not made under the Act at all, nor have the Rules any reference to such sales, and Section 49 of the Act of last Session preserves all the rights of the tenant under the Ulster Custom. The Land Commission have not, therefore, in any way exceeded their powers.

CLANRICARDE ESTATE (CO. GALWAY).

Mr. JOHN ROCHE (Galway, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he is aware that a tenant on the Clanricarde Estate, named John Hanly, of Clonmoylan, Woodford, who was evicted in 1888 for two years' rent, was reinstated in April 1895 on payment of two years' rent and costs; that within twelve months after reinstatement Hanly was processed to sessions held at Gort last April for nine years' rent; that the nine years' rent were made out in the following manner, viz., three years that elapsed between date of decree and eviction, during which time Hanly was caretaker (and not liable for rent), together with the six years he was out of his farm; and (2) whether, in view of the landlord's refusal to recognise Part V. of the Land Law (Ireland) Act of 1896, will he introduce or support a Bill making Part V. compulsory on the Clanricarde Estate?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: In 1888 Hanly was served with a notice constituting him a caretaker under the 7th Section of the Land Act of 1887, but he was not evicted until May 1890, and in the interval he was in occupation and had the use of the farm. He was out of the farm for four years and ten months, and was reinstated in March 1895, upon payment of two years' rent and costs, and upon his agreeing to pay arrears, of which £10 was to be paid within six months. Failing to fulfil his agreement he was processed to Gort Quarter Sessions for nine years' rent, when the case, in consequence of the solicitor not having the agreement in Court, was dismissed. An appeal was lodged to the following summer assizes, but meanwhile Hanly had effected a settlement with the landlord by agreeing to pay a year's rent forthwith and a further sum of £15 by instalments. The decision at Quarter Sessions was reversed at Assizes; Hanly was released from any further obligation, and both he and his counsel acknowledged he had obtained liberal terms. Hanly now states that he is perfectly satisfied with the settlement made with him by the agent. The last paragraph of the Question has no relevancy to the case of Hanly, who is now a tenant in full possession. The answer would, in any case, be in the negative.

QUEEN'S JUBILEE (YEOMANRY CAVALRY).

MAJOR WYNDHAM-QUIN (Glamorgan, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War if he will make such arrangements as will enable detachments of Yeomanry Cavalry to be present at the forthcoming celebration of the 60th anniversary of Her Majesty's reign?

MR. BRODRICK: The details for the celebration are still under consideration; but the presence of some Yeomanry is contemplated.

INDIAN FAMINE.

MR. T. R. BUCHANAN (Aberdeenshire, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether, in view of the statement made by Sir James Westland as to the cost of the famine and its effects on the finances of India, he can state in what way the Government are prepared to aid in defraying from Imperial funds part of the expenditure on famine relief?

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: The state of things in India is at present as follows. In the face of a famine of almost unexampled extent and severity, the Government of India have spared no expense in their efforts to prevent or mitigate its effects, and, thanks to the means which the foresight of previous Governments has provided, and to the zeal and vigour with which they have been used, those efforts have been on the

whole very successful. In spite of the very heavy charge and loss of revenue, estimated at Rx.11,000,000 net, which this condition of affairs has entailed, the Government of India estimate the deficit for the closing financial year at not more than Rx.1,987,000, and that for the coming year at Rx.2,464,000. They propose to carry on without interruption or postponement all the great public works which they have begun or have undertaken to begin, and, mainly for this purpose of productive expenditure, which is virtually a further insurance against future famines, they propose to borrow Rx.4,000,000 in India and £3,500,000 sterling in England, besides £1,000,000 temporary debt. With the view of insuring against the financial loss involved by possible famines, a surplus revenue has for many years been raised and devoted to the avoidance or reduction of debt, and the loans which it is now intended to incur form part of the general policy of borrowing for remunerative railway construction, and must not be attributed merely, or even mainly, to the results of the famine. The credit of the Government of India has, I believe, never been appreciably higher than at the present moment. In these circumstances no application for assistance has been made by the Government of India, nor do Her Majesty's Government as at present advised see any reason to anticipate such application by an offer of financial aid.

SALE OF ESTATE (CO. CORK).

MR. JAMES GILHOOLY (Cork Co., W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether an absolute order has been made for the sale of the estate of Robert Hedges Eyre White, situated near Bantry, county Cork; and (2) if so, whether he can state approximately when the sale will take place?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The reply to the first inquiry is in the affirmative. The rental is in progress of settlement, but it would not be possible, at present, to state even approximately the date at which the sale will take place.

VOLUNTEER ARTILLERY.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether any of that portion of the Artillery attached to the Volunteers which is described as Field Artillery consists of batteries having trained horses of their own; and, if so, how many such horses the Volunteer Artillery possesses in all?

MR. BRODRICK: Artillery Volunteer corps having field batteries or batteries of position are not required to possess horses for battery work; but they are granted a money allowance with which to hire them, and a condition of the grant is that the full complement of horses shall be producible whenever required. The arrangement has been found satisfactory.

ALDERSHOT (CANTEENS AND MESSES).

MR. McLEOD: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that an officer commanding a regiment at Aldershot lately came into possession of a document showing that commissions had been paid by a firm of brewers to various persons at the Camp in connection with the sale of beer to canteens and messes; and whether an inquiry into this matter was held; and, if so, with what result?

MR. BRODRICK: The facts are as stated in the Question. A searching inquiry has been held, and the Report is, at present, under consideration.

ESTATE RECEIVERS (CO. KERRY).

MR. FLAVIN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will grant a Return showing the estates in the county of Kerry over which receivers have been appointed since 1879, giving respectively the owner of the estate, name, and residence of the receiver appointed?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The Return in question would be very troublesome to prepare, and I am not aware that it would serve any useful purpose. If, however, the hon. Member desires to have this special information regarding a particular property in the county, and will communicate with me on the subject, I will endeavour to procure the information for him.

TUNNEL (IRELAND AND SCOTLAND).

MR. H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the recent improvements in engineering methods, and especially in the art of tunnel boring, he will appoint a Royal Commission or some properly qualified technical Committee to inquire into the feasibility of constructing a tunnel between Ireland and Scotland; and whether, in the event of such body reporting favourably upon the project both from the engineering and from the financial point of view, he will recommend that the cost of making this important addition to the internal communications of the United Kingdom be defrayed wholly or in part from national resources?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): In answer to my hon. Friend, I have to say that I am quite prepared to consult with the President of the Board of Trade on the subject of the question, but I fear the financial aspects of any such engineering undertakings as my hon. Friend suggests are not of a very promising character.

BRITISH TROOPS IN INDIA (HEALTH).

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury what steps the Government propose to take with reference to the Memorandum and Report of the Departmental Committee on the health of the Army in India?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I have, with much regret, asked my hon. and gallant Friend more than once to put off this Question, and I am afraid I must ask him again to postpone it until Thursday, when I hope the Government will be able to make a statement on the subject. [*Cheers.*]

SUPPLY (SCOTTISH ESTIMATES).

MR. McLEOD: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, for the convenience of Scottish Members, he will state when it is proposed to take the Scottish Estimates?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I will endeavour to give due notice of the time when the Scotch Estimates will come on. But I am afraid I cannot at the present moment forecast precisely when that day will be.

MR. McLEOD: May we assume that they will not be taken before Easter?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Yes; I think you may.

PUBLIC WORKS (WEST COAST OF SCOTLAND).

Mr. HEDDERWICK: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the public works established on the West Coast of Scotland in 1891 were the public works to which he referred in his programme, published in East Manchester in 1895; and, if not, whether he can state the nature of the works to which he then made a promissory reference?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: Whenever I have referred to public works in the Highlands, those works have been intended to facilitate and improve communication between the Western Highlands and other parts of the country.

MARKET GARDENERS' COMPENSATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred from Tomorrow till Tuesday, 30th March.

MOTIONS.

DANGEROUS PERFORMANCES.

Bill to extend the age under which the employment of young persons in dangerous perpromances is prohibited, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Jesse Collings and Secretary Sir Matthew White Ridley; presented and Read the First Time; to be read a Second time upon Monday next, and to be printed.—[Bill 164.]

PUBLIC OFFICES (WHITEHALL) SITE.

Bill for the acquisition of a Site for Public Offices in or near Whitehall; and for other purposes connected therewith, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Akers-Douglas, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Hanbury; presented, and Read the First time; to be Read a Second time upon Thursday, and to be printed.—[Bill 165.]

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS BILL.

Third Reading deferred till Thursday.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

MILITARY WORKS (MONEY) BILL.

Considered in Committee.

[The Chairman of Ways and Means, Mr. J. W. Lowther, in the Chair.]

[Progress, 22nd March.]

Clause 2,—

BORROWING FOR PURPOSES OF ACT, AND ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT.

(1.) The Treasury may, if they think fit, at any time for the purpose of providing money for the issue of sums out of the Consolidated Fund under this Act, or the repayment to that fund of all or any part of the sums so issued, borrow money by means of terminable annuities for such period not exceeding *thirty years* from the passing of this Act as the Treasury may fix, and all sums so borrowed shall be paid into the Exchequer.

(2.) The said annuities shall be paid out of moneys provided by Parliament for army services; and if those moneys are insufficient, shall be charged on and paid out of the Consolidated Fund or the growing produce thereof, but shall not be payable as part of the permanent annual charge for the National Debt.

(3.) The Secretary of State shall in every financial year cause to be made out and laid before the House of Commons an account, in the form required by the Treasury, of the money expended and borrowed and the securities created under this Act, and the accounts of expenditure under this Act shall be audited and reported upon by the Comptroller and Auditor General as appropriation accounts in manner directed by the Exchequer and Audit Departments Act 1866.

*The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS (Mr. J. W. Lowther, Cumberland, Penrith) ruled that the Amendment standing in the name of Mr. Vesey Knox (Londonderry)—[in Sub-section (1), after the word "fix" to insert the words "having regard as to buildings and furniture, to the periods allowed for the repayment of loans raised by local authorities for expenditure of a like character"]—was out of order, as the Committee had already decided that the period of the loan was to be in the discretion of the Treasury.

Mr. T. LOUGH (Islington, W.) moved, after Sub-section (1) to insert

"Every loan raised in pursuance of this section shall be discharged before such date as may be fixed by the Treasury."

He thought the right hon. Gentleman would have no objection to these words. The great fault he found with this part of the Bill, which governed the granting of the loan, was, that it was much more carelessly drawn than was the Bill of 1890. The words he proposed were adopted from the Bill of 1890.

*The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford) said the Amendment was really quite unnecessary. He pointed out that the House had already agreed to a provision as to the period of terminable annuities.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. KNOX moved, in Sub-section (2), to leave out from the word "services" to the end of the Sub-section. He contended that these words were unnecessary and misleading. It was absurd to say that this money was not to be part of the permanent annual charge on the National Debt. It would come out of the Consolidated Fund, and to all intents and purposes it would be the same as any other part of the National Debt.

*Mr. BRODRICK said the object of these words was, that if there was any deficiency of the money voted for Army services in a particular year, the sum should be charged on, and be paid out of the Consolidated Fund.

Mr. LOUGH said that if the words were omitted the War Office would have no option but to come to Parliament for the money; whereas, if the words were retained they would have an option in the matter. They found when the Estimates were before them, that, owing to the influence which these loan Bills exerted, it was impossible to tell how much was spent in any year on the Army or Navy, and this Bill tended to widen that influence.

*Mr. BRODRICK said it might happen, owing to expeditions or otherwise, that the sum voted for the Army in a particular year was exceeded. In that case the matter would come before the Public Accounts Committee, and, therefore, in such a case the matter would have to be sanctioned by the House. This provision was a safeguard to prevent the sum being charged on the National Debt.

Mr. KNOX said the Public Accounts Committee, although ranking very high among the Committees of that House, was not equivalent to the House itself. The position was really this, if this provision was retained the War Office would be able each year to exceed their expenditure on the ordinary Military Estimates without being compelled to present to the House a supplementary Estimate. He thought that was a most objectionable provision.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir Michael Hicks Beach, Bristol, W.) said that if the Amendment were adopted the result would be that the Treasury would be unable to borrow the money at all, because it was necessary that the charge should be imposed on the Consolidated Fund in order that proper security might be given to the persons who would lend. The object of the words at the end of the section, providing that the monies should not be payable as part of the permanent charge for the National Debt, was to secure that the charge might not escape the notice of Parliament, but should be brought under the cognisance of Parliament every year.

Mr. KNOX said that as he understood the effect of the provision, it would be possible for the War Office to apply the amount voted for annuities to meet an excess of expenditure under some other head of the Army Estimates, and to leave the annuities to be paid out of the Consolidated Fund.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: The hon. Gentleman may rest assured that the Treasury will take care that nothing of the kind is done. ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. J. A. PEASE (Northumberland, Tyneside): Would it be possible for the War Office, under this Bill, to avoid coming to the House for a Supplementary Estimate if they exceed the monies provided by the House?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: It would be impossible. ["Hear, hear!"]

Amendment negatived.

Mr. LOUGH moved, in Sub-section (3), to omit the words "of the money expended and borrowed, and the securities created under this Act," in order to insert the words, "showing as follows:—

"(*a*) The money expended during that year in pursuance of this Act, and the purposes on which that money was expended, distinguishing the expenditure under each of the heads in the schedule to this Act; and

"(*b*) The mode in which that money was provided, and the securities (if any) created for providing the same; and

"(*c*) The aggregate of money expended since the passing of this Act on the purposes thereof, and the aggregate amount of money borrowed, and of securities (if any) created for providing for the same; and

"(*d*) The balance (if any) of the sums authorised by this Act to be issued."

The object of the Amendment, which consisted mainly of the provisions embodied in the Barracks Act of 1890, where they had worked well, was to secure that the fullest and completest information of the expenditure under the Bill was laid yearly before the House.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER assured the hon. Member that there was really nothing in the Amendment that was not covered by the words of the Bill. So far from there being any deep design on the part of the War Office to deprive Parliament of information in the matter, the words of the Barracks Act of 1890 were not inserted in the clause simply because it was found by the Treasury on investigation that the clause as it stood was just as effective for the purpose aimed at.

MR. LOUGH said that the right hon. Gentleman's defence of the words of the Bill, so far as borrowing was concerned, was complete. The same security was given in the Bill in the matter of borrowing as was given in the Barracks Act of 1890. But the most important provision in his Amendment was that which related to the expenditure being set on that under set and distinct heads. He contended that under Clause 1, the War Office, if they effected a saving under one head, could apply that saving to cover an over expenditure under another head, without coming to the House for a Supplementary Estimate, or the House knowing anything about it. They could not stop the work, but they could at least secure that the House of Commons should know how the expenditure had been incurred.

MR. D. F. GODDARD (Ipswich) remarked that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not said that the words of the Amendment were wrong, but that the words in the Bill really amounted to the same thing. He would suggest that, as the words of the Amendment would not do any harm to the Bill, or detract one iota from its force, but would simply render it compulsory, that there should be a full and complete statement made to the House as to the way the money had been expended, the Amendment should be accepted by the Government.

*SIR C. DILKE remarked that, as there were five different Loan Acts running at the same time, it was difficult, under the present form of account, to ascertain under which of them the money might be spent in a particular year. He had himself experienced this difficulty. The amount of money which had been repaid, for instance, in connection with the Army or Navy, was not shown, and they had to turn to the Estimates to see whether there was any item to be deducted from the total amount of loan. There was thus a great risk of confusion arising when they wished to ascertain the total amount of the expenditure. For his part, he should be satisfied if the Chancellor of the Exchequer would undertake either to make himself each year a very full statement to the House, or see that one was made at least once a year, showing the expenditure under each of the different heads in a particular year for both services. All he desired was, that the House should have an opportunity of knowing, year by year, the exact amount that had been spent in this way, and what was to be added to the amount voted in the Estimates for these services.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER pointed out that the Amendment did not in effect differ from the words in the Bill, but it laid down most minutely the exact form of procedure. The right hon. Baronet was not satisfied with the form of accounts which had appeared in the past, as it did not convey a sufficiently full statement of what had been done. He was very much inclined to agree with the right hon. Gentleman. He thought it important, especially from the point of view of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that Parliament and the country should know thoroughly the sum of money that was being spent every year on the Army and the Navy, whether it were by annual estimate or by way of works, under Bills of this kind. He could assure the right hon. Gentleman if he would favour him with any suggestion as to the adoption of a clearer form in the future he should be very glad to receive it. He hoped, for the reasons he had given, the hon. Member for Islington would not press his Amendment. He could assure the hon. Gentleman he was quite as anxious as he that this information should be given, so that it might be known what had been done, because he thought it might be some check on the applications which were made for expenditure.

MR. J. A. PEASE asked if the words as they at present stood in the Bill would provide that the money expended should be shown under the various heads, so that Members could distinguish how much had been spent on each?

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER replied in the affirmative.

MR. LOUGH did not think the right hon. Gentleman had made out any case for rejecting the Amendment, which he should accordingly press to a division.

Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 193; Noes, 73.—(Division List, No. 139.)

On the question "That the Clause stand part of the Bill,"

MR. J. CALDWELL (Lanark, Mid) urged that the money to pay for the works under the Bill ought to have been provided out of the ordinary Estimates, and not by borrowing. To defend the borrowing on the ground that these works were permanent was the most extraordinary step. He should have called attention to this before, though he voted for the Second Reading of the Bill, had not discussion been closed after ten minutes' debate. It was no part of State policy to spread the payment of works over a period of years because the works were called permanent. That was a procedure strictly confined to local government, where resources were limited. A post office was a permanent work, but the whole expenditure on it was provided for in one year's Estimates. Pictures purchased for the nation were paid for at once. Ships for the Navy were paid for within the time occupied by their construction. These proposals of the Government were a new method of creating a national debt. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had plenty of money to pay for works as they were completed; but he even refused to reduce the period of repayment from 30 years to 15 years. As a protest against such an enormous amount of money being provided for by loan he should vote against the clause.

MR. T. LOUGH said that there was nothing left but to vote against the Clause, which was thoroughly bad. The main provision was thrust upon the House suddenly. It was not embodied in the Barrack Act of 1890, though the House had been assured that it was; and if the House had realised that fact, the provision would not have been passed on Thursday. If a shorter period were adopted the difference in amount would not be so much as might be supposed, and sound finance required that the expenditure of the year should be met by the Estimates for the year. His right hon. Friend came into the House in an amiable mood, and said if something was promised he would support the Government; but why should not the promises find expression in the Bill itself? The clause was a bad clause, and should be modified in the direction of the Act of 1890. If the objection were carried to division he should vote against the Clause.

MR. HERBERT LEWIS (Flint Boroughs) argued that it was not right to lay an undue burden on posterity in matters of this kind, and the Bill should follow the precedent of the Imperial Defence Act of 1888. The objects of that Act were practically the same as those of the present Bill, the construction of certain works of defence involving an expenditure of £2,600,000, and the term of repayment provided was 12 years. Why had the Government now extended the period to 30 years? As a matter of general policy it was wrong to have such a long period as 30 years. In local loans a shorter period was insisted upon, and there was no reason for departing from the salutary principle in Imperial matters. Some explanation should be forthcoming.

Mr. CALDWELL hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not allow the Clause to be taken without an explanation.

*The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said it had already been stated by the Under Secretary for War that the term fixed was the maximum term, and not necessarily the term for which all the money would be borrowed, and this maximum term was adopted from the precedent of the Naval Works Act, 1895, passed by the late Government. So much of the work included in the present Bill was of a permanent character that the term of 30 years was fully justified. There was land taken for manœuvres, ranges, and earth works, and expenditure on permanent barracks, replacing temporary huts, which would last for far longer than 30 years, and probably for 100 years, as the hon. Member opposite had suggested. Throughout the entire Bill the expenditure was of a nature that should not be thrown upon the taxpayers of a few years to come; it should be fairly spread over a reasonable number of years for the alleviation of the burden.

Mr. CALDWELL said the right hon. Gentleman had not answered the question as to State policy. He went back to the only precedent he could find, that of 1895—

*The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said it was not the only precedent.

Mr. CALDWELL said a better precedent was the Naval Defence Act, where the period was 12 years, and the works took several years to complete.

*The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said surely the hon. Member would not compare the life of a ship to the duration of these permanent works?

Mr. CALDWELL said he would not, but there was a fair comparison in the buildings that had been constructed, and for Civil Service and Post Office purposes a period of 15 years had been considered a sufficient period to cover the cost of constructing permanent buildings.

Question put, "That Clause 2 stand part of the Bill."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 150; Noes, 60.—(Division List, No. 140.)

Clause 3,—

APPLICATION OF SURPLUS INCOME OF YEAR 1896–7 FOR EXPENSES OF SCHEDULED WORK.

(1.) Such sum as is shown by the account certified by the Comptroller and Auditor-General under section four of the Sinking Fund Act, 1875, to be the surplus of income above expenditure for the financial year ending the thirty-first day of March one thousand eight hundred and ninety-seven shall, instead of being applied as provided by the above-mentioned Act, be set apart in the Exchequer account and applied by the Treasury at such times as they direct in paying any sums authorised by this Act to be issued out of the Consolidated Fund.

(2.) The amount which the Treasury may borrow under this Act shall be reduced by the amount set apart in the Exchequer account in pursuance of this section.

Mr. LOUGH said that he desired to ask the meaning of this clause. Why was the Sinking Fund Act of 1875 dragged in? He was constantly suspicious that works would be carried out without the sanction of Parliament being previously obtained; and, at least, he claimed that when the works were done there should be an account of them within the year, so that they might know how the money had been expended.

*The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said the clause was a copy of a similar clause in the Naval Works Act of last year, under which the amount to be raised by loans would be reduced, and the surplus of the year would be available in relief of loans for the future under this Bill. That was the object of the clause, and it was one which should commend itself to hon. Gentlemen opposite.

Mr. CALDWELL saw the point precisely. If this clause were not accepted, then any surplus would go to the reduction of the National Debt, and the effect of the clause was to intercept the money. But what the Government were proposing to do here was that out of the balance of the different accounts, instead of applying the money to the reduction of past debt, they were going to appropriate it to the purposes of future expenditure.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: No. The object of the clause is really to avoid paying off debt with one hand and borrowing with the other.

MR. LOUGH thought the assurance that this was exactly the same clause as was in the Act of 1895 went a long way to meet his objection.

Clause ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 4,—

SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the Military Works Act 1897.

REPORTS TO PARLIAMENT.

MR. LOUGH moved the following new clause:—

The Treasury shall report to Parliament whenever any excess is allowed to be so applied, and shall in such report specify how and out of what items the savings are expected to be made, and what is the amount of the estimated excess on each item.

He thought the right hon. Gentleman had promised that this point would be dealt with, but it ought to be in the Bill. The clause seemed a reasonable one, because it was evident, from the large round sums which were taken, that there would be large savings out of them. As the Bill now stood, any amount saved upon any particular item might be applied by the Secretary of State for War to any new works, even to works not specified in the Bill at all. The Committee should have some details of what could be done in this way. He hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would yield something on this point. The clause was only carrying out the promise which had already been given.

Clause read the First time.

On the Motion "That the Clause be read a Second time,"

*MR. BRODRICK said the hon. Member wished to secure that all possible information should be given, as well as control by Parliament. The Government had no desire to exclude Parliament from any information or control. The hon. Member seemed to think that the Treasury and the War Office would be able to exchange gigantic sums from one head to another; but he seemed to forget that the Treasury existed in order to check the extravagant use of powers by any Department. If the Government did not give the whole of the items in all the heads of the schedule it was not because there was any desire to conceal from Parliament what they were doing; but on defence works especially it was not desirable that we should tell the whole world what we were spending at each place. Parliament had never asked hitherto that this should be done, but if the clause were inserted this would be the effect of it, and any check obtained would be gained at the expense of publicity, which it was the desire of Parliament to avoid. The War Office had undertaken to lay before the House every year, not merely the statements of the expenditure in the past year, but also an estimate of the probable expenditure for the following year.

MR. LOUGH asked why that promise should not be incorporated in the Bill? It should be borne in mind that the right hon. Gentleman might not always be in his present position, and how in these circumstances could the right hon. Gentleman pledge his successors?

*MR. BRODRICK said that they were following the previous practice. The War Office had always shown this expenditure, and it was not necessary to put the provision in the Bill.

Motion made, and Question put, "That the clause be read a Second time."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 48; Noes, 137.—(Division List, No. 141.)

SCHEDULE.

MILITARY WORKS.

Heads. (1.)	Estimated Cost. (2.)
	£
1. Defence works	1,120,000
2. Barracks, including completion of large camps	2,989,000
3. Ranges, including accommodation for manœuvring and mobilization	1,149,000
4. Staff and contingencies	200,000
TOTAL	£5,458,000

Note.—The above works are partly new works and partly works which have been commenced and not completed under the Imperial Defence Act, 1888 (51 & 52 Vict. c. 32), and the Barracks Act, 1890 (53 & 54 Vict. c. 25).

Question proposed, "That this be the Schedule of the Bill."

On the return of the CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS, after the usual interval,

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS, in reply to Mr. Lough, on a point of order, said the hon. Member was right in assuming that the Amendments on the Paper to the schedule were not in order. He did not say that Amendments could not be put down that would be in order.

MR. LOUGH said he should be glad to know whether he could put down an Amendment on which he could discuss the question of the fortifications of London.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS said it was not his business to tell the hon. Member how to frame his Amendment.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Cavan, W.): Is the Amendment of the hon. Member for Derry out of order?

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: Certainly.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: Then I cannot ask as to the amount spent in Ireland?

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: I do not think that Debate could arise upon that matter.

MR. CALDWELL supposed they were entitled to ask for an explanation where these defensive works were to be.

MR. BRODRICK said he had already dealt with the point.

MR. J. H. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy Burghs) asked what was the expenditure in Scotland?

*MR. BRODRICK said if they began to give the expenditure in different places they would be giving that information to foreign countries which they had already declined to give.

*MR. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith Burghs) said that there was one point to which he wished to invite attention. A portion of this money was to go to providing a camp of exercise, but that camp was situated at a great distance from a large number of corps in Scotland. The policy of the War Office had been to consolidate the armed forces in one centre, but this left the Militia and Volunteers in Scotland without fair facilities for exercise. He was not asking for any addition to the Vote any more than he was suggesting any reduction of the Vote, but he hoped that the policy indicated by the Bill did not mean that the question of a camp in Scotland was to be debarred from the consideration of the War Office. There should be a northern as well as a southern camp, and without that he believed it would be difficult to secure recruits for the Regulars and efficiency in the Scottish regiments. There ought to be, for the proper exercising of the troops, a camp in the North of England or in Scotland.

*MR. BRODRICK said he fully realised the importance of the point raised by the hon. Member. In Scotland they raised some of the finest regiments in the service. His hon. Friend had not developed any policy to-night. One of the difficulties they had to meet in Scotland was, that the country was so prosperous, that it was not easy to find an extent of land suitable for the purpose at a moderate figure. At the same time they wished to make military instruction as accessible as possible to the regiments north of the Tweed.

MR. J. P. FARRELL complained of the massing of troops in huge barracks, thus taking them away from the small towns. He asked whether any portion of this large sum of money would be spent in making the Longford barracks sufficient for the purposes of a headquarters barracks. He did not think it was quite fair to the people of the locality to deprive them of the presence of the troops, who were a source of revenue to the town. He thought the question deserved some attention, and if the right hon. Gentleman did not see his way to give some satisfactory reply, he would have to ask his Friends to go to a division.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth) understood that part of this money was to be spent on barracks in Wynberg, and he would like to ask what was the nature of the tenure of the land on which the barracks were to be constructed. So far as he could ascertain, land for Imperial purposes could only be obtained and held subject to the goodwill of a self-governing colony. He would also like to know whether it was contemplated that the troops to be accommodated in these barracks were to be used for the general purposes of a self-governing colony which did not contribute to their support, or for the Imperial purpose of garrisoning the sea works and maintaining the Imperial base.

MR. J. COLVILLE (Lanark, N.E.) said it was desirable that the Committee should know what proportion of these large sums of money was to be expended in Scotland. Seeing that Scotland paid more than her fair share to the Imperial Exchequer, she ought to benefit by the expenditure.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. J. POWELL-WILLIAMS, Birmingham, S.), in reply to his hon. and gallant Friend, said that, in the opinion of the Military authorities, the proposals brought forward by the War Office with respect to the Cape of Good Hope were the best that could be made in the national interest. He was not able to say exactly the terms on which the land at Wynberg would be acquired and held, but his hon. and gallant Friend might be perfectly satisfied that no building would take place there unless the War Office authorities were sure that the tenure was secure. With regard to the Longford barracks, he could not tell the hon. Gentleman who raised the question, for reasons which had been accepted by the Committee, any details with regard to the expenditure. It was not in the public interest that such details should be given. Of course, he could quite understand the interest taken by the hon. Gentleman in the matter; but unfortunately these things had to be determined, not on considerations such as the wishes of the inhabitants of a locality, but according to the views of the Military authorities, and they came to the conclusion that the headquarters ought, for military reasons, to be removed from Longford.

*SIR J. COLOMB asked whether he was to understand that money was to be spent on a site the tenure of which had not been settled?

MR. POWELL-WILLIAMS: No.

*SIR J. COLOMB thought it was most desirable that the Committee should be perfectly clear as to what they were doing in this matter. ["Hear, hear!"]

*MR. BRODRICK said there was no difficulty about the site. They did not propose to build on land the title to which was not secure.

*SIR J. COLOMB: But can my right hon. Friend say what the title is?

*MR. BRODRICK said that that was a solicitor's question. He was not in possession of the titles under which barracks were held by Great Britain all over the world. All he could say was that the Department would take good care that the title was secure before they built on a single inch of the ground. There was no case that he could remember within the last ten years in which the title of land acquired by the War Office had proved defective.

*SIR J. COLOMB said that when he was told that the military authorities considered this the best site, he wanted to know whether they considered it so from the point of view of the troops accommodated there being used for Imperial purposes, or for the general purposes of the Cape Colony. ["Hear, hear!"]

*MR. BRODRICK said that the General Officer Commanding in a Colony had first to see to the defence of the Imperial Coaling Station; and, secondly, to make use of the troops for such general purposes as might be found necessary in the particular colony.

*Sir J. COLOMB said he would ask the right hon. Gentleman how far Wynberg was from the Cape position at Table Bay? ["Hear, hear!"]

*Mr. BRODRICK said it was at a distance of about eight miles. Surely it was not supposed that our relations with foreign Powers were such that we dare not keep any of the troops more than 100 yards from the guns. Every man could be on the spot in a couple of hours.

Mr. DALZIEL thought that the question asked as to the tenure of the land was a very reasonable one. He thought the right hon. Gentleman would agree that, in view of the number of Imperial troops stationed in South Africa during recent years, this expenditure was a very large one indeed. Here they had a proposed expenditure for hospital and barrack accommodation of £160,000 in one particular place. He wanted to know the facts upon which it was determined to incur this expenditure; what recommendations were made, and who was responsible for them? He also wished to know whether there had been any communications with Cape Colony to ascertain whether or not the Government of that Colony would bear any portion of this expenditure? Was the British taxpayer to have to pay unaided for the defence of the Cape? Had the Cape Government been asked whether they could bear any portion of this expenditure, and was there anything to show that they had been consulted and approved of this expenditure?

Mr. HERBERT LEWIS said that he had been to Wynberg, and that the situation was a very fine one. It was one of the most beautiful suburbs of Cape Town, and certainly the officers and men quartered there would have no cause to complain from a social point of view. The question of tenure was important because the colony, it must be remembered, was not exclusively a British colony. There were certain circumstances that made it very important that the question of tenure should be gone into very carefully indeed. With reference to the defence works, on which a sum of £1,120,000 was to be spent, he wished to know where the money was to go. In connection with the Naval Works Bill they had had a full statement as to the places where the money was to be spent, and as to the particular objects in view. Why was not similar information given on this occasion? At all events more general information ought to be supplied.

Mr. LOUGH said that the proposed distribution of the money was very bad indeed. For example, a sum of £600,000 was set aside for expenditure in Ireland on a class of work which many people disapproved of entirely. What the Irish people wanted was a reduction of taxation, and the attempt to compensate them for their over-taxation by extravagant naval or military expenditure in Ireland would not answer. It would have been far better to use the money in making some sort of provision for our troops on Salisbury Plain. The Bill provided for nothing except the purchase of the land. There was no provision for the erection of any buildings on this waste place near Stonehenge. The first item in the class of defence works was £97,000 for the fortification of London. On this subject a great deal of discussion had taken place in the public Press, but in that House it had been treated as a great mystery. He believed that, as a matter of fact, anyone was at liberty to walk round the existing defences, which were in most absurd places on the hills round London.

*The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS: This question was raised and thoroughly discussed on the first clause, and the hon. Member is not entitled to repeat the whole of his arguments, or to raise the question again.

Mr. LOUGH said that there was an item of £260,000 proposed to be expended in St. Lucia. With regard to this they had not heard a word from the right hon. Gentleman opposite. Some justification ought to be given for this extraordinary item. It was for defraying the cost of transferring the military headquarters from Barbadoes to St. Lucia. That, as far as they knew, Barbadoes was the best place for the headquarters. There were 200,000 people in the island, while in St. Lucia there were only 45,000. With Barbadoes there was considerable trade, but there was hardly any with St. Lucia, which, he understood, was a most unhealthy place. There were only about 700 or 800 soldiers in Barbadoes, and he did not understand why it should be necessary to spend £260,000 in housing that handful of men in St. Lucia. In

Mauritius it was proposed to spend £169,000 on barracks and other works, and here again no justification had been given for the expenditure. Why were these large sums of money to be spent in remote parts? He did not believe in the plan of scattering the Army all over the world. It would be much more satisfactory to provide good military accommodation in the capital of the Empire.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: That is quite irrelevant to the question before the Committee.

*SIR J. COLOMB said that the justification for the steps which the Government proposed to take with regard to St. Lucia was supplied by the Report of Lord Carnarvon's Commission on Imperial Defence, a Commission that sat for three years and took evidence as to the most economical arrangements for the defence of the Empire as a whole. The Commission found that it was absolutely necessary to secure Jamaica and St. Lucia as strategic points in the West Indies. At present we had a military force divided between Barbadoes and St. Lucia, which was an inconvenient and expensive arrangement. The Government were quite right in what they intended doing. He thought that they were also right in not erecting barracks or other buildings on Salisbury Plain. For the training of troops, what was wanted was ample space and perfect liberty of movement.

*GENERAL LAURIE would have liked to have placed himself on record as opposed to any expenditure on permanent works for the defence of London, but as this had been ruled out of order, he wished to indorse what had fallen from the hon. and gallant Member with reference to the undesirability of erecting permanent buildings on Salisbury Plain.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: There is no proposal in the Bill for erecting permanent buildings on Salisbury Plain, and therefore no discussion can be raised upon the subject.

MR. W. ALLAN (Gateshead) entirely agreed with some of the proposals of the Government. He approved, for example, of the proposal to spend £67,000 in providing better accommodation for the garrison at Bermuda. He knew that not long ago the accommodation for the troops there was of the vilest possible description. He highly approved of the expenditure in making coaling stations more healthy. The radius of the action of our fleet would be determined entirely by the convenience with which ships could be coaled. Bermuda was most inadequately fortified. St. Lucia also needed proper fortification. The Mauritius ought to be the centre of our West Indian coaling stations. He was glad that money was to be spent there, because the Mauritius had been too long neglected by the military authorities. At a short distance from the Mauritius was Madagascar. At any time the Suez Canal might be closed, and we should have to find our way to India by the Cape. Besides properly fortifying the Mauritius, there ought to be ample dockage for ships. But we had no docks there. Sierra Leone and St. Helena also required coaling stations and fortifications. He believed the money proposed to be spent in fortifying coaling stations would be well spent and contribute to the safety of the Empire.

MR. T. C. H. HEDDERWICK (Wick Burghs) wished to press upon the War Office the desirability of erecting barracks at Dingwall.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS said that would arise on War Office administration, and not under this Bill.

MR. CALDWELL alluded to the fortifications to be erected at Cape Town at a cost of £160,000, and said that, considering they would provide local as well as Imperial defence, we ought to stipulate for an indefeasible title to the land on which they would stand. The land should also not be exempted from local taxation.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS ruled that this might properly be discussed on one of the War Office Votes, but it could not be discussed now.

MR. CALDWELL then asked what defence works were to be undertaken in Scotland. The War Office said the matter must be kept secret lest foreign Governments might know what our intentions were. But foreigners found out as soon as the works were commenced. The money would come out of the Imperial purse, and Scotland, as part of the United Kingdom, should know what portion of the money would be spent there. He also wished to know how much of the money was to be devoted to the defence of the Clyde.

*MR. BRODRICK: It is intended to spend money on the defences both of the Forth and the Clyde.

MR. LEWIS asked whether anything was to be done for the fortification of Holyhead Harbour? He thought they ought also to have some adumbration of what was to be done in regard to the defence of London.

SIR J. FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.) rose in his place and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put," but the Chairman withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

Debate resumed.

COLONEL WELBY (Taunton) asked the right hon. Gentleman what accommodation was going to be provided for the troops who were going through their musketry course on Salisbury Plain? There were men who were attached permanently to a range who would suffer during inclement weather if accommodation were not provided. He would ask whether it was to be simply a musketry camp, or whether it was going to be a large base like Aldershot? Was there going to be sufficient accommodation to turn it into a large permanent camp? He asked these questions as a practical soldier, and had no desire to waste the time of the Committee. ["Hear, hear!"]

*MR. BRODRICK said there was not the least intention of creating a second Aldershot on Salisbury Plain. The object was, in the first instance, to afford a manœuvring ground for the troops, some of whom would probably belong to the Militia or the Volunteers. They should provide a range with the object of carrying out that portion of the training. There was no intention of erecting a great number of permanent barracks on Salisbury Plain, as had been done at Aldershot.

MR. JOHN DILLON (Mayo, E.) said he objected to the way in which the money had been spent in regard to Dublin Barracks. Unfortunately he was not able to enter into the matter in detail, as he had left the materials he had prepared at home, but the waste of money had been a scandal and disgrace to the War Office. He objected also to the expenditure on the military accommodations of St. Lucia, as being inconsistent with the policy of this country towards the United States of America. If the Government really desired to have peace with the United States, he argued, they would not select this moment to set up a great arsenal at the door of the United States. He assumed that this step was decided on last year at the time of the Venezuelan difficulty. This expenditure was in a different category to that proposed at the Cape, because they were all looking out now for war at the Cape.

*SIR C. DILKE said that a Commission had reported ten years ago in favour of the proposed works at St. Lucia as a naval basis in the West Indies, and they had no conceivable connection with what had happened last year between this country and America. [*Ministerial cheers.*] There was every reason to hope that if we were engaged in a great war the United States would be neutral and would feed us; and, therefore, this expenditure was in no way directed against that country. ["Hear, hear!"] In fact, if the United States did not exist, the expenditure at St. Lucia would still be necessary. ["Hear, hear!"] As regarded London, he thought the use of the word "fortifications" in connection with a scheme that involved an expenditure of only £120,000 was ridiculous; but if any large expenditure were contemplated in that direction it would be better to spend it on the Fleet, which must be the real defence of the country, and on field artillery.

MR. DALZIEL said there were two points in regard to which he thought the Committee had a right to expect some information from the Under Secretary for War. In the first place, a representative Member of the House had declared they all knew there was going to be war in South Africa, and hence this proposed expenditure at Wynberg. That was a statement that should not be allowed to pass without notice from the Under Secretary for War. [*Ministerial cries of* ["Divide!"]

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS: Order, order! Any such discussion would be quite out of order. [*Ministerial cheers.*]

MR. DALZIEL said he did not propose to discuss anything that did not properly arise from the schedule. He would ask the Under Secretary in the first place whether any communication had passed between the War Office or any other Department and the Government of the Cape in regard to this expenditure; and secondly, upon what evidence had Wynberg been selected for the expenditure, as there was a difference of opinion as to the wisdom of erecting the barracks at that place. He thought the Committee was entitled to information on those two points before they assented to the Bill.

*Mr. BRODRICK said there was not the slightest objection to giving the information the hon. Gentleman asked for. The expenditure at Wynberg was due to the fact that for more than a year some troops had been under canvas at the Cape. It was extremely bad for the men to be so quartered, if they could be housed in barracks; and the canvas system was also expensive, for the arms and accoutrements suffered. The Secretary for the Colonies announced some months ago that it was considered desirable by the Colonial Defence Committee that in connection with the additional coaling stations, the garrison should be increased. That was a recommendation made quite apart from the state of affairs in South Africa, and was acceded to by the Government. Wynberg was selected because it was a healthy place for the troops.

Mr. CHARLES BILL (Staffordshire, Leek), referring to the items for hospital and barracks accommodation at Sierra Leone, desired to know whether a new hospital was to be built or the present one was to be enlarged, and whether a new barracks was to be erected on another site, or there was to be an extension of the existing barracks?

*Mr. BRODRICK replied that the object of taking money for better hospital accommodation was because the present accommodation at Sierra Leone was not sufficient. As regarded the barracks, a final Report as to the site was being awaited before a decision was arrived at.

Question put.—The Committee divided:—Ayes, 179; Noes, 59.—(Division List, No. 142.)

Preamble agreed to.

Bill reported, without Amendment; to be Read the Third time upon Thursday.

PUBLIC HEALTH (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [5th February], "That the Bill be now Read a Second time."

Question again proposed:—Debate resumed.

*Sir W. WEDDERBURN (Banffshire) said that this Bill, which purported to consolidate and amend the Public Health Law in Scotland, was remarkable not so much for what it contained as for what it did not contain. A number of difficulties which had been felt had not been met at all. He referred especially to the sanitation of the dwellings of farm labourers, farm servants, crofters, and small holders. These four large classes of the population were now suffering very much from the insanitary condition of their homes, which was not only dangerous but disgraceful to the country. He should like to know whether the Government were prepared to deal with this question. He had put down an Amendment declaring that the House declined to read any Public Health (Scotland) Bill a Second time unless this question were adequately dealt with; but that Amendment he should not move at the moment. Why should not the Bill of 1895 for improving the condition of farm servants—a Measure introduced by Mr. Seymour Keay, and accorded the assent of the House—be incorporated in the present Bill? A Bill was brought forward in February 1895, by Mr. Seymour Keay, for the improvement of the accommodation for farm servants in farmhouses. He seconded the Motion for Second Reading on March 28th, and the Second Reading was carried without a division. It might, therefore, be regarded as a non-contentious Measure, and he saw no reason why its very useful provisions should not be included in the present Bill. Clause 3 of that Bill provided that the local authorities might make bye-laws to secure proper accommodation, and the proper amount of cubic space for farm servants, power being given to the medical officer to examine any buildings used for the lodging of farm servants, and to report upon their condition to the local authority. If the lodging was reported insanitary it became the duty of the landlord to make such alterations as would bring the place within the requirements of the bye-laws under a penalty of £5, and 20s. a day until the required alterations or repairs were completed. These proposals met with the approval of the House, and he would ask why they were not included in this Bill, which professed to consolidate and amend the public health law of Scotland, and to be a sort of code of health for that country? This, however, it would scarcely be if it omitted to deal with some of the classes of the population now specially suffering from want of accommodation. Besides the accommodation for labourers in farm houses, there was great want of cottages in some of the agricultural districts of Scotland for labourers, crofters, and small holders. The rural population was in consequence declining, and farmers complained bitterly that they had to get their labour from the towns, and to accept the services of unskilled men in lieu of the relatives of small holders in the glens. Cottages were unhealthy and insufficient, and the present state of the law could not improve matters, but rather aggravated the evil. This was especially the complaint in the north-east of Scotland. His hon. Friend the Member for East Aberdeen and himself had drawn the attention of the House to this matter. What happened was this. The Medical Officer of Health was called in, and if he found a house or cottage unfit for habitation he reported it. But he hesitated to condemn it, for the result of his doing so would be the house would be pulled down, and the last state of the poor tenants would be worse than the first, for it was better to have a bad house to live in than no house at all. The medical officer was in a difficult position; he was afraid to condemn the house, for there was no power to compel a landlord to repair or rebuild. Condemnation of a house implied its demolition, and against this there was an outcry from the whole countryside. The law operated fairly well in crowded towns because ground was valuable, and it was to a landlord's advantage to rebuild the house. Not so, however, in the glens, and in agricultural parts of the country; it was there rather to the profit of the landlord to get rid of the house. He was willing enough to pull it down, but very unwilling to build another in its place. He preferred to include the site of it in the neighbouring farm. This was not invariably the case, and some landlords were careful to do their duty in this matter, but very often a landlord was anxious to clear off the cottages, especially when there was valuable shooting, lest the house should harbour poachers, or the poor cottagers become paupers and chargeable to the rates. This was a matter which had excited a good deal of feeling, and it was brought to the attention of the late Secretary for Scotland, who instituted an inquiry. Perhaps the Lord Advocate could say what was the result of that inquiry, and whether any proposals were made which might properly be embodied in this Bill? There was a difficulty in inducing landlords to grant sites for cottages, but if the Parish Councils were empowered to buy land for the purpose there would be little difficulty in getting houses built. At present agriculture was very much handicapped from these causes.

*MR. SPEAKER reminded the hon. Member that he was somewhat outside the objects of the Bill, which was a Public Health Bill.

*SIR W. WEDDERBURN said he only asked that the three points he had indicated would be favourably considered: (1) that the provisions of Mr. Seymour Keay's Bill, as it received the assent of the House, should be incorporated in the Measure; (2) that power should be taken to compel cottages to be repaired and put in a sanitary condition, and he would suggest, in order that that might not be a hardship on proprietors, that provision should be made by which public money should be advanced to them on favourable terms if they were not otherwise prepared to undertake the responsibility; and (3) that reasonable facilities should be provided, in order that sites should be obtained for suitable and sanitary houses being built either by the people themselves or by professional builders. Thus the evil of the slums in the large towns would be much reduced, and the farmers would have at hand men properly trained from their boyhood to agricultural work.

*Sir **JOHN LENG** (Dundee) said he did not rise to oppose the Bill now before the House. As a consolidating Measure it contained many useful clauses, but he submitted that a Public Health Bill which was likely to remain on the Statute-book for a number of years should represent the high-water mark of sanitary science and administration. There was one respect in which it appeared to him that this Measure did not reach, but fell far short of, that high-water mark. It had been demonstrated, and was now generally recognised, that in our large cities and towns epidemic diseases, more especially typhoid and scarlet fever, were largely due to the importation of milk from infected farm-houses, dairies and cow-sheds. Two of our largest cities in Scotland—Edinburgh and Glasgow—and also one of our towns—Greenock—had for a number of years been in the enjoyment of powers enabling their sanitary inspectors to proceed to infected farm-houses, dairies and cow-sheds. Under clauses in their local Acts those powers had been most beneficially exercised. He was interested in this question, because in the constituency he represented they had had numerous instances of very serious epidemics directly traced to the introduction of milk from farm-houses, and dairies, and cow-sheds within a few miles of the town, but beyond the municipal boundary. For a number of years the sanitary inspector in Dundee was also the sanitary inspector in several of the adjacent parishes. Various instances arose in those parishes in which he was able to go into the counties and visit the farmhouses, and, without exercising any compulsory power, he was able to induce the farmers to submit their places to isolation, take charge of the patients who were suffering from disease, and in that way very speedily to prevent the extension of cases. In one of the cases there were 118 persons suffering from disease, and several valuable lives were lost. One might have supposed, from the experience of Edinburgh and Glasgow, and from the information as to how this worked in Dundee, that equally efficient clauses would have been introduced into this general Bill to those that existed in the Edinburgh and Glasgow Acts. Instead of that, the particular clause in the Bill was, in comparison with the powers they possessed, very roundabout, dilatory, and inefficient. He hoped that when this Bill reached the Committee it was to go before, the Lord Advocate would agree very much to improve the clause that was in the Bill. In answer to a question the other day, the right hon. Gentleman seemed to speak as though he were in some sense specially the representative of the counties in this matter. But he submitted to the right hon. Gentleman that he was also the Minister for the burghs as well as the counties, and that he had to look to the general health of the population. ["Hear, hear!"] There was some feeling of the counties standing on their dignity—that they were not willing to consent to the incursion of the burgh inspectors into the counties. He thought there should be no such feeling, but that every facility should be given, especially within a certain radius of our large towns, for the sanitary inspector to proceed to examine on the spot, and at once to induce the parties interested to agree to prompt measures being taken. Under the clause as it stood, there were six or seven different stages to be taken. Application had to be made to the sheriff or magistrate, and evidence must be submitted to justify the action of these officials. In this way it would almost be necessary to allow the spread of disease and the accumulation of cases in order to present evidence to the sheriff upon which it would be necessary for him to act. Prevention was the object at which they ought to aim; and promptly, and without unnecessary delay, action should be taken. It was understood that in future the clause was to be considered a standard clause, and that nothing going beyond that clause in local Acts was to be permitted. He hoped that the Lord Advocate would be prepared to give that clause very careful consideration, so as to bring it more into line with the clauses of the Edinburgh and Glasgow Acts than was now the case. In this matter it was well to remember the old adage, *Salus populi suprema lex.* The health of the people should be the first consideration in all sanitary legislation.

Mr. **CALDWELL** said that the question involved in this Bill was of very considerable importance to the people of Scotland. It was not necessarily in any sense a Party question; but it had occupied the attention of local authorities in burghs and counties so much that deputations on the subject had been sent to the Government when the former Bill was before the House of Lords. He regretted that the Lord Advocate had not seen his way to explain the Bill on the Second Reading, and to show the local authorities, in so far as the Bill was a consolidating and amending Measure, the reasons which prompted the Government to introduce the Amendment in the Bill. He thought that the local authorities, who had taken great interest in the subject, were entitled to expect this from the Government. But unfortunately the Bill had been launched without any explanation from the Lord Advocate, who was otherwise engaged on official duties; and the result was, that the House was discussing the Second Reading without these matters having first been explained by the Government. The Bill contained 176 clauses, and it depended on a general view of the Bill, so far as consolidating and amending were concerned, whether it ought to go further. There were special reasons, moreover, why the House should discuss this matter on the Second Reading stage. This stage afforded hon. Members an opportunity of taking a general survey of the Bill, whereas in Committee they were limited to the special Amendment under discussion. It also gave an opportunity to the Government to ascertain the views of those on the opposite side, and to allow the Government to indicate their willingness to accept certain Amendments which would be very useful in promoting the progress of the Bill. Besides, the Secretary for Scotland, who was responsible for the Bill, was not a Member of the House; so that when the Bill went to a Committee the noble Lord was not there to hear the arguments, to be consulted by the Lord Advocate. On the other hand, when hon. Members brought forward certain points opportunity was afforded to the noble Lord to consider them before the Committee stage was reached. Again, this was a Measure which dealt with an important question of rating for public health, both in burghs and counties; and there was no subject of more importance to the taxpayer. If this Measure, however, were to be sent, say, to the Standing Committee on Law, what would be the effect, so far as the Scottish Members were concerned? Questions of rating might be discussed in that Committee, but when the Bill came back to the House hon. Gentlemen would not be able, on the Report stage, to discuss that question. If, therefore, they were to discuss the rating question involved in the Bill, and if discussions were to be taken to show Scottish opinions in the House, their only alternative was to bring the subject forward on an Amendment on the Second Reading. Looking to the possibility that this Bill might go to the Standing Committee on Law, they had to provide for a contingency of that kind. Then, as a consolidating Measure, this Bill dealt with the Public Health of Scotland Act, 1867, which contained about 120 clauses; 100 of those clauses were adopted practically without alteration, or alterations of a very minor kind. He thought that was a great compliment to the Lord Advocate, who drew the Bill, which had stood the test of 30 years. He hoped that when they were dealing with the question of consolidation and Amendment of the Law, it would be done with equally good care, and that they would prepare a Measure satisfactory to the people of Scotland, which would last for at least 30 years, and which might redound to the credit of even the Lord Advocate opposite. [*Laughter.*] By the 1875 Act—and practically it was the only point of change of consequence in these repealed Acts—the borrowing power was 50 years. Under the Bill it was made 30 years. He thoroughly approved of that change, and he hoped the Government would abide by it. He would venture to point out that there was a little conflict in the Act of 1891 and the present Bill. In the event of a burgh being formed the incidence of taxation should be the same as it was in the county from which it had been taken. They had this very peculiar state of matters. Under the Bill the burgh rating was to be upon an incidence of taxation which was practically wholly occupier, and the county rating was to be half owner and half occupier. The result would be that in burghs to be constituted they would have an incidence of rating different under the Act of 1891 than under the present Bill. By Section 125 of the Bill, it was provided that in cases of burghs where a special drainage district was formed, and was satisfactorily doing its drainage work, such special district was not to be called upon to be assessed for other districts. But while that proviso applied to special drainage districts of burghs, there was no corresponding proviso in the Bill as regarded the special drainage districts in the counties. He did not know why that omission took place, because, in the Act of 1867, there was such a provision. They had a similar proviso as regarded the water supply in special drainage districts in the Act of 1867, and they had it also in the Act of 1891. It was of a permissive character, and they were going to retain it in the statute. That was a proviso which would have to be very carefully considered. There was another point. The Parish Council had the power to intervene in cases of public health, in places where so many of the inhabitants of the parish might intervene in calling attention to sanitary matters. The Bill repeated the Act of 1867, whilst it did not re-enact the power of Parish Councils to exercise the power which the repealed Act gave. Again, Section 45 of the Act of 1894 provided that the assessor in framing his valuation roll should show the special districts, so that the rating of the special districts might appear on the roll. That was essential, but, strangely enough, it was omitted from the Bill. So far as the Bill was an amending Measure, it introduced 33 clauses of the Public Health (London) Act, and 18 clauses of the English Public Health Act 1875. It did not follow that provisions applicable to London were at all applicable to Scotland. Take the case of offensive trades. In London and the urban sanitary districts of England no one could establish any of the offensive trades which were specified without the consent of the local authority in writing. By this Bill such a provision was applied to Scotland, but it was not limited to urban districts—it was extended to the whole of the country. The Scotch Act of 1867 was much more reasonable, for it simply provided that a person was not to establish an offensive trade within 500 yards of a town or village without the consent of the local authority. Of course a man was amenable to other provisions against the setting up of a business which was an offence to the neighbourhood. Then clause 37 enabled local authorities to take certain steps in respect to filthy houses. In England a house could only be entered upon the certificate of a medical man, to the effect that it was in such a state that it might be injurious to health. It would be novel to put such power of entry into the hands of an ordinary sanitary inspector. In England, any person who knowingly cast any matter infected by infectious disease into an ash pit was liable to a certain penalty; but then the Act very properly provided that the local authority must provide a proper place into which the infected matter must be placed. In this Bill there was no such necessity cast upon the local authority. Under the Act of 1867 a local sanitary authority might provide recreation grounds at the expense of the district rate. Why was there no such provision in this Measure? The matters dealt with by the Bill were very important in the case of Scotland, where they had counties on the one hand and burghs on the other, and between them there was springing up in the counties large communities which were in an intermediate stage. They wanted to give them a Measure of local government, which would make life comfortable until they were made into burghs. It was because they had not got provision for dealing with these districts in an intermediate stage that he thought these powers ought to be extended largely in this Bill. Another point was that the Standing Joint Committee was to be repealed. He thought the time had come when in the matter of public health they should not have the interposition of a body which had no practical concern with it. Another matter was the acquisition of land for public health purposes. That was a very important point. They would not give to the local authorities power to acquire land for public health purposes, and thus they would be compelled to go to Parliament. Let them see what changes that Bill proposed in the procedure in Parliament. It was that, in the case of a Bill brought into the House, it was to be referred, not in the way in which Provisional Orders were referred, to a Select Committee after the Second Reading. It might be referred to a Joint Committee. This would be denying the remedies of that House to a man who had not got the money. Under the Parish Councils Act of 1894, if land was required for Parish Council purposes, it could be acquired simply by an order of the Local Government Board, and under the Light Railways Act of last Session authority for the compulsory acquisition of land could be obtained from the Board of Trade, in both cases without any application to Parliament. Surely, therefore, the same powers ought to be given in such an important matter as the public health. He objected to any Public Health Bill which did not give the local authority power to acquire land with the consent of the Local Government Board without going to Parliament. As to the question of arbitration, there was to be a single arbiter, but who was to appoint the arbiter? Under the Parish Councils Act the arbiter was appointed by the Local Government Board, and under the Light Railways Act by the Board of Trade. In this Bill a Local Ordinary of the Court of Session was introduced. Why should not the Secretary for Scotland be trusted in the matter? Then there was the question of assessment. In the counties the assessment was made one-half on the owner and one-half on the occupier. Under the Bill there was to be a rate levied on the gross rental. When dealing with matters of public health, which were practically of the same character in boroughs and counties, why should the rates be levied differently in the burghs to what they were in the counties? The effect of the Bill was, in the case of burghs, to make the rates practically leviable wholly on the occupier. He was quite aware that the Lord Advocate had introduced the matter of the 1867 Act, which gave a certain amount of choice to the local authority; but why should the local authority have the choice of levying the rate in some places wholly on the occupier and in some places half on the owner and half on the occupier? Why should it not be made clear that the rate should be levied on the same principle in burghs and counties? All modern legislation had been in favour of the principle of the division of rates. Take the Roads and Bridges Act introduced by the Government opposite in 1887. There they had the rate levied half on the owner and half on the occupier. The same principle obtained in the case of the school rate, and again in regard to the general improvement rate in burghs. Surely public health involved the general improvement of the burgh. The Bill dealt with sewerage and drainage. Were not these an appendix of property, and why should property not bear its equal share of sewerage and drainage, which were necessary to make the house habitable and an appendix to rent? There was no possible reason why the rate should not be divided equally between owner and occupier in this case. In the discussions on the Agricultural Rating Bill the First Lord of the Treasury accepted the principle. The reasonableness of having the rate divided was admitted on all hands, and he begged to move to leave out from the word "that," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words—

> "This House declines to read a second time a Bill to consolidate and amend the Laws relating to Public Health in Scotland which does not provide for the rates under the same being levied one-half upon the owners and the other half upon the occupiers of land in burghs as in counties; and which does not permit of the acquisition of land compulsorily for Public Health purposes by an Order of the Local Government Board of Scotland without resort to Parliament."

*MR. A. D. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars), in seconding the Amendment, complained that an elaborate, complicated Measure like this, repealing in whole or in part no less than 11 Acts, should have been introduced without any Ministerial explanation by the Lord Advocate. The Local Government Act of 1894 and the Light Railways Act passed last year furnished precedents of a more simple and effective way of obtaining land for the purpose of the Bill. The arrangements introduced into this Bill would lead to an extraordinary expenditure of time and money. It would cause dilatory objections to be made. It would confer enormous advantages on the rich, and impose serious drawbacks on the poor. To many local authorities the delays, expense, and trouble would be a serious matter. The Bill would apply, not to rich places only, but to scores of poor districts in Scotland which could ill afford the money to devote to removing the opposition which under the Bill might be made by a single memorialist. Under Clause 25 of the Bill, it was optional how local communities should be assessed to meet the expenses under the Bill. This would permit them to have different methods and rates of assessment to meet the necessary charges for carrying out the Act. In the first place, the local authority might levy assessments under what would be similar to a General Purposes Rate. In Glasgow these were levied half on the occupier and half on the landlord. Or the local authority might assess at the same rate as the police assessment in Glasgow. For some purposes this was assessed so that the occupier paid on rents of £4 and upwards, and the owner on rents under £4. But in assessing for cleansing the streets, the owner paid all the assessment and the occupier none. In the assessments under the Bill there should be an absolute rule laid down and no option given, and, having regard to the way assessments were made already, they should be one-half on the occupier and one-half on the owner. Another assessment in Glasgow represented a charge which would be similar in its nature to the charges incurred under this Public Health Act—the sewage assessment, which in Glasgow was paid entirely by the owner and no part by the occupier. Therefore, according to the way assessments were made in Glasgow at the present time, the Bill should provide that at least one-half of the whole assessment should fall on the owner, and there should be no option given in the Bill to assess localities in different ways.

Sir T. GIBSON-CARMICHAEL (Edinburgh, Midlothian) thought his hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lanark had a right to appeal to the Lord Advocate for an explanation. He supposed this was the only Scotch Bill that the Government would see fit to bring forward. He did not think there was a single Scotch Liberal Member who had not claimed that a Bill of this nature ought to be passed. There were other Scotch Members behind him who were interested in the matter, and he himself claimed a right to say something in regard to this matter. He was only a new Member of that House, but he had been a chairman of two District Councils for many years, and took an interest in it. He appealed to the Lord Advocate to allow Scotch Members on that side to have a say in this matter. He did not think this should be treated as a Party matter. He thought it would have been much better if the Government had divided the Bill into two parts, and brought in first a County Bill, and then, if time permitted, have brought in a Borough Bill afterwards. As to judging in regard to unsound food, and the carcases of animals, he did not think justices of the peace were the proper people to deal with the matter. He said that although he was himself a justice of the peace.

The hon. Member was speaking at Midnight, when the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Thursday.

MILITARY LANDS ACT (1892) AMENDMENT BILL.

Considered in Committee.

[Mr. Stuart-Wortley in the Chair.]

[Progress, 15th February.]

Clause 1,—

POWER FOR COUNTY OR BOROUGH COUNCIL TO CONSTRUCT BUILDINGS AND WORKS.

The council of a county or borough may, at the request and for the purposes of one or more Volunteer corps, purchase, erect, alter, or enlarge any building, or construct, alter, or enlarge any permanent work, or aid in the purchase, erection, construction, alteration, or enlargement of any such building or work.

*Mr. BRODRICK said the Bill was extremely urgent, and, as there was no difference of opinion as to its merits, he trusted, in the interest of Volunteering, the Committee would allow it to go through.

Mr. PATRICK M'HUGH (Leitrim, N.) moved, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."

*Mr. BRODRICK appealed to the hon. Member not to persist in his Motion, as the whole House was agreed as to the necessity and urgency of the Bill.

Mr. PATRICK M'HUGH: I mean to persist with my Motion. [*Ministerial cries of* "Oh!"]

Question, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again," put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

SUPPLY [19TH MARCH].

Resolutions reported.

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1897-8.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding £4,696,000, be granted to Her Majesty to defray the expenses of wages, &c., to officers, seamen and boys, coastguard, and Royal Marines, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1898."

ARMY (ORDNANCE FACTORIES), 1896-7.

2. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £100, be granted to Her Majesty to defray the charge for the Ordnance Factories (the cost of the productions of which will be charged to the Army, Navy, and Indian and Colonial Governments), which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1897."

CIVIL SERVICES (EXCESS), 1895-6.

3. "That a sum, not exceeding £263 4s. 1d., be granted to Her Majesty, to make good an Excess on the Grant for the Mint, including Coinage, for the year ended on the 31st day of March 1896."

NAVY ESTIMATES 1897-8.

4. "That a sum, not exceeding £648,800, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the expense of works, buildings, and repairs, at home and abroad, including the cost of superintendence, purchase of sites, grants in aid, and other charges connected therewith, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1898."

5. "That a sum, not exceeding £1,384,600, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the expense of victualling and clothing for the Navy, including the cost of victualling establishments at home and abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1898."

6. "That a sum, not exceeding £161,400, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the expense of medical services, including the cost of medical establishments at home and abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1898."

7. "That a sum, not exceeding £10,600, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the expense of Martial Law, including the cost of naval prisons at home and abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1898."

8. "That a sum, not exceeding £249,000, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the expenses of the Royal Naval Reserve, and the reserve of retired officers and seamen pensioners, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1898."

9. "That a sum, not exceeding £2,675,000, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the expense of naval armaments, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1898."

10. "That a sum, not exceeding £195,400, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the expense of various miscellaneous effective services, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1898."

Resolutions agreed to.

11. "That a sum, not exceeding £243,600, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the expenses of the Admiralty Office, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1898."

MR. J. H. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy Burghs) called attention to the question of the linoleum contract in connection with the Navy. The First Lord of the Admiralty would remember that last year he brought this matter forward, and he had given private notice to the Secretary to the Admiralty that he intended to again raise the question that night on the Report of Supply. It was not necessary to go into details further than to bring under the attention of the right hon. Gentleman the main points of the grievance of which complaint was made. The point was this—every year contracts were asked for from all the principal linoleum manufacturers of the country, and such conditions were inserted in the contracts as to make it practically impossible for any other than one particular firm to secure them. The grievance was not an imaginary one. He had had representations from linoleum manufacturers all over the kingdom, with the single exception of the one particular firm to which he had referred. He raised this matter three years ago, during the administration of the late Liberal Government, and so convinced them of the utter unfairness that was shown to all the linoleum manufacturers of the country by the terms of the contract, that they practically threw the matter open, with the result that the particular firm lost the contract for a year. There appeared to be in reference to the matter some extraordinary influence which he had not been able to understand. Although the contract was taken away from this particular firm, and, notwithstanding that a firm of which he knew something, paid £2,000 in order to put down a special plant to manufacture the antiquated pattern of linoleum required by the Navy, the contract was taken once more and again given to the one firm which had previously been favoured. What he asked was, that no preference should be shown to any particular firm. There ought to be a fair and open market, and the cheapest and best Estimate should win. That was not so in this case. He did not know what reply would be given that night, but if the right hon. Gentleman would look into the records with regard to linoleum he would see that if the contract was taken away from the firm in question, it would result in a saving of between £2,000 and £5,000 a year. The terms inserted in the contracts by the Admiralty were not warranted by the circumstances, and insisted upon certain conditions being observed which in every other private firm throughout the country had been abolished for something like 50 or 60 years. What he asked the right hon. Gentleman to do was to promise that he would personally, with the assistance of colleagues, look into this matter and convince himself whether or not there was any justice in the complaint that was made on behalf of the linoleum manufacturers of the country generally. To put himself in order, he should move the reduction of the Vote by £600.

*MR. SPEAKER: I have already proposed the Question that the House agree with the Committee. The hon. Member cannot move a reduction. He can vote against the Resolution.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. G. J. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square) said that he had no hesitation in giving the hon. Member the assurance which he desired. He would personally, with the assistance of his colleagues, go into the matter. He had had no notice, or he should have been prepared with an answer to the hon. Member. He had no doubt that there was a satisfactory explanation, and he could not accept the facts as stated by the hon. Member.

Resolution agreed to.

12. "That a sum, not exceeding £749,500, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the expense of half-pay, reserved, and retired pay, to officers of the Navy and Marines, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1898."

13. "That a sum, not exceeding £1,053,200, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the expense of Naval and Marine pensions, gratuities, and compassionate allowances, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1898."

14. "That a sum, not exceeding £327,400, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the expense of civil pensions and gratuities, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1898."

15. "That a sum, not exceeding £60,300, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the expense necessary to be provided for under the arrangement made between the Imperial and Australasian Governments, for the protection of floating trade in Australasian waters, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1898."

Resolutions agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS [19TH MARCH].

Resolutions reported.

1. "That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the years ending on the 31st day of March 1896 and 1897, the sum of £2,230,835 17s. 1d. be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."

2. "That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March 1898, the sum of £24,327,700 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."

Resolutions agreed to.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. James William Lowther, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Hanbury, "to apply certain sums out of the Consolidated Fund to the service of the years ending on the 31st day of March 1896, 1897, and 1898," presented accordingly, and Read the First time; to be Read a Second time To-morrow, at half-past Three of the clock.

MERCHANT SHIPPING (UNDERMANNING) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

FOREIGN PRISON MADE GOODS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

BERRIEW SCHOOL BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

KINGSTOWN HARBOUR ROADS TRANSFER BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

LAW OF EVIDENCE (CRIMINAL CASES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ALDERSHOT AND FARNBOROUGH) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

ARCHDEACONRY OF CORNWALL BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

TRUSTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Third Reading deferred till Thursday.

SUPPLY.

Committee deferred till Wednesday.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Committee deferred till Wednesday.

COUNTY COURTS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday, 13th April.

POOR LAW OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION ACT (1896) AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

STEAM ENGINES AND BOILERS (PERSONS IN CHARGE) BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Motion for Committal to Standing Committee on Trade, &c. [17th February] further adjourned till Thursday.

PLUMBERS' REGISTRATION BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

COUNTY COUNCILLORS (QUALIFICATION OF WOMEN) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday, 6th April.

SCHOOL BOARD ELECTORATE (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday, 7th April.

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday, 9th April.

TROUT FISHING CLOSE TIME (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday.

CROFTERS' HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) ACT (1886) AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday, 31st March.

CROFTERS' HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) ESTATES TAIL BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday.

ESTATES TAIL BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday.

HIGHWAYS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS (IRELAND) (WOMEN) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday.

MERSEY CHANNELS BILL.

Considered in Committee.

Clause 1:—

Committee report progress; to sit again to-morrow.

LICENSING EXEMPTION (HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

MOTIONS.

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY (TRANSFER OF PATRONAGE).

Bill for transferring the right of Presentation to the Professorships of Botany and Natural History in the University of Edinburgh, ordered to be brought in by the Lord Advocate and Mr. Anstruther; presented, and Read the First time; to be read a Second time upon Thursday, and to be printed.—[Bill 166.]

SUPERANNUATION ALLOWANCES (SCOTLAND).

Bill to provide Superannuation Allowances for the Assessor of Railways and Canals in Scotland and the clerks and other officers permanently employed by him, ordered to be brought in by the Lord Advocate and Mr. Anstruther; presented, and Read the First time; to be Read a Second time upon Thursday, and to be printed.—[Bill 167.]

SALE OF DISTRESS AMENDMENT.

Bill to amend the Sale of Distress Act 1690, ordered to be brought in by Mr. H. D. Greene, Mr. Cozens-Hardy, Mr. Hopkinson, and Mr. Lloyd Morgan; presented, and Read the First time; to be Read a Second time upon Friday, 2nd April, and to be printed.—[Bill 168.]

House Adjourned at Twenty Minutes after Twelve o'Clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 23rd March 1897.

PRIVATE AND PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION BILLS.

Ordered,—

That no Private Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a Second time later than the third day on which the House shall sit after the recess at Whitsuntide.

That no Provisional Order Confirmation Bill brought from the House of Combe read a First time later than the third day on which the House shall sit after the recess at Easter.

That no Provisional Order Confirmation Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a Second time later than the third day on which the House shall sit after the recess at Whitsuntide.

That when a Bill shall have passed this House with Amendments, these Orders shall not apply to any new Bill sent up from the House of Commons which the Chairman of Committees shall report to the House is substantially the same as the Bill so amended.

That this House will not receive any petition for a Private Bill later than the 6th day of April next, unless such Private Bill shall have been approved by the High Court of Justice; nor any petition for a Private Bill approved by the High Court of Justice later than the third day on which the House shall sit after the recess at Easter.

That this House will not receive any Report from Judges upon petitions presented to this House for Private Bills later than the third day on which the House shall sit after the recess at Easter.

Ordered, That the said Orders be printed and published, and affixed on the doors of this House and Westminster Hall.—[No. 35.]

House Adjourned at Twenty-five Minutes before Five o'Clock, to Thursday next, a Quarter past Ten o'Clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 23rd March 1897.

THOMPSON'S DIVORCE BILL [H.L.].

Reported from the Select Committee on Divorce Bills, without Amendment; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be Read the Third time.

METROPOLITAN AND OTHER POLICE COURTS BILL.

Second Reading deferred from this day till Monday next.

QUESTIONS.

SHUTTLE GUARDS.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to a case at Blackburn County Court, in which William Guest sued for compensation for the death of his wife, alleged to have been caused by a shuttle flying, and in which the Judge nonsuited the plaintiff, and stated that there was no legal evidence that the particular loom was dangerous; and, whether there is any ground for the distinction drawn among shuttles employed in cotton manufacture, by which some are held to be dangerous machinery and others not?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY, Lancashire, Blackpool): My attention has been called to this case. So far as can be judged from the newspaper reports, the Judge nonsuited the plaintiff on the ground that no evidence was produced either that the loom at which the plaintiff's wife was working was dangerous, or that she had been struck by a shuttle at all. His decision appears to me to decide nothing except as to the manner in which this particular case was presented to him; but, no doubt, the danger from unguarded looms varies greatly in degree according to the speed and other conditions.

MADAGASCAR.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH (Flintshire): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1) whether his attention has been called to the increasing persecution of the native Protestants in Madagascar, at the instance of French Jesuits; (2) whether many churches and schools, built by Protestants for Protestant use, have been forcibly taken from them and given to Roman Catholics; (3) whether the Queen has recently been deported from Madagascar to the Isle of Bourbon because she would not abjure the Protestant faith; and (4) whether these acts are in contravention of the solemn assurances given to this country at the time the French occupation took place?

MR. MICHAEL DAVITT (Mayo, S.) said that, before the right hon. Gentleman answered the Question, he wished to ask whether the alleged persecutions were due to the fact that there had been a war in the island, and not to a spirit of religious animosity?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. G. CURZON, Lancashire, Southport): No doubt there has been some excitement owing to the war in the island, but I should have thought that the war was at a sufficiently remote date to have allowed such feelings to have subsided. In answer to the Question on the Paper, I have to say that the attention of Her Majesty's Government has been called to the complaints made by the Protestants in Madagascar, though we have at present received no official confirmation of the statement contained in the second paragraph of the Question. The entire subject, which is one of much importance, is engaging the attention of Her Majesty's Government, who, as I have previously informed the House, have addressed representations to the French Government on the matter. The grounds upon which the Queen has been deported from Madagascar have not been reported to us, and if I may judge from the recent Debate in the French Senate, are not as yet known in France.

Sir Matthew White Ridley.

BOARD SCHOOLS (SPECIFIC SUBJECTS).

*MR. W. E. T. SHARPE (Kensington, N.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether similar figures to those for the Board Schools throughout England and Wales, given in the last Report of the Committee of Council, Table No. 9, pp. 612-615, on the number of scholars who in each year proceed to the third stage in specific subjects, are published for the London Board Schools; and, if not, whether the Vice President would have a Return made for the last five years, and a similar one given in future annexed to the Annual Reports of the Committee of Council?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir JOHN GORST, Cambridge University): I do not think it would be possible to give in the Annual Report the Return asked for in respect of any individual School Board, but I can give the hon. Member the figures for the London School Board for the last five years, if he wishes.

PARCEL TRAFFIC (ENGLAND AND AMERICA).

SIR HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, if he is aware that the London and South Western Railway is endeavouring to divert trade from British steamship lines to the American flag, by widely advertising at every station that the American Government carries parcels from this country to America at preferential rates if under the American flag; and, having regard to the depressed condition of the national shipping industry, if Her Majesty's Government will give like advantages to the Union Jack over the Stars and Stripes?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. R. W. HANBURY, Preston): The Postmaster General is not aware of any advertisements of the London and South Western Railway Company notifying that the American Government carries parcels from this country to America at differential rates or otherwise. Such a statement would be untrue, as neither the American Post Office nor any other department of the American Government maintains any service for the conveyance of parcels to and from this country. It is understood that facilities for Customs clearance are given to the public at New York in regard to particular kinds of parcels carried by the subsidised steamers of the American Line. This is clearly a matter outside our control. The procedure in regard to Customs clearance on this side is already so simple that it is difficult to see how Her Majesty's Government could afford a corresponding preference to parcels carried in British vessels, even if it were our policy to differentiate in the manner stated.

Sir HOWARD VINCENT: Does the right hon. Gentleman say that the American Government offers no facilities for the conveyance of parcels under the American flag?

Mr. HANBURY: Not for the carriage of them, but it does for the clearance of them by the Customs on the other side.

ASCENSION DAY (WEST HAM SCHOOL BOARD).

Lord BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether his attention has been called to the medal regulations made by various School Boards, whereby medals are awarded to children who make every school attendance regularly and punctually; whether he is aware that the West Ham School Board has refused to award medals to the children of Church of England parents who withdrew their children on Ascension Day for the purpose of their attending church, under Section 7 of the Education Act of 1870; whether the Board is acting within its legal rights in thus penalising the children of parents who are acting strictly within their legal rights; and even if it is, whether he considers such action fair and reasonable; and whether he can take any steps to remove this grievance?

Sir J. GORST: While the Committee of Council regret that any School Board should show so little consideration to the religious observances of the Church, or of any religious denomination, they have no power to interfere. The managers of any Public Elementary School are within their legal right in attaching such conditions as they please to the prizes for attendance which they distribute.

LAND COMMISSION (REDUCTIONS OF RENT).

Sir JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether his attention has been drawn to the reductions of rent fixed by the Land Commission in the second statutory term, as shown by the latest Return; (2) whether, in every case, the Court has explained the principles on which such reductions were made; (3) whether the rents so fixed have any and, if so, what proportion to the marketable value; and (4) whether it would be possible to furnish a Return of the prices paid for the tenants' interest in holdings with reference to which fair rents have been fixed?

Mr. M. J. FLAVIN (Kerry, N.) asked whether the attention of the right hon. Gentleman had been called to the judgments delivered in Wexford in 20 cases on Friday last, in which the rents were raised; and, if so, whether he could state upon what ground the rents had been so raised?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. Gerald Balfour, Leeds, Central): No, Sir; I am not aware of the cases referred to by the hon. Gentleman, and they have not been reported to me. In answer to the Question of the hon. and gallant Member, I have to state that the reply to the first paragraph is in the affirmative. Since passing the Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1896, the Court, when fixing the fair rent of the holding, records in the form of a schedule the particulars relative to the holding mentioned in the first section of that Act, and which have been taken into consideration in arriving at the fair rent. This provision of the Act has been complied with by the Sub-Commissions, and it is believed by the County Courts, in all cases since heard, as well as by the Land Commissioners in all cases heard by them since the decision of the Court of Appeal in "Cope *v.* Cunningham" was communicated to them. No statutory duty is cast upon the Courts of explaining any principles beyond such as are apparent from the particulars recorded in the schedule, nor are the Land Commissioners aware whether any of the Courts have or have not given any such explanation in any particular cases. If the expression "marketable value" used in the third paragraph is equivalent to "competition value," it is not possible to lay down any proportion rule which would be applicable. It would be impossible to furnish a Return of the prices paid for the tenants' interest in holdings with reference to which fair rents have been fixed, owing to the absence, in the majority of cases, of any evidence that the tenants' interest in the holding has been sold. However, under the form of schedule now in use, if it appears that the tenancy has been purchased since the passing of the Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Act, 1870, the date of the sale and the amount of the purchase is now recorded.

Mr. E. CARSON (Dublin University) asked whether the Land Commissioners had in several cases since they commenced their revaluation of rents laid down any principle on which they granted reductions on the rents previously fixed?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: I think that the answer to that Question has already been given in my reply. The Commissioners are in no way required to lay down any principle on which rents are to be fixed; therefore, ultimately it must come to an exercise of judgment on their part.

Mr. CARSON: Am I to understand the right hon. Gentleman to say that the Commissioners are not bound to give any reasons for the judgments they give?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: They are bound to do nothing further than is laid down in the Act. [*Nationalist cheers and laughter.*]

POSTMEN'S WAGES.

Sir JOHN LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, if he can explain on what principle the maximum wages of the postmen's staff at Preston where there are 60 men, at Dundee where there are 74 men, and at Southampton where there are 85 men on the staff, is only 26s., while at Lincoln and Gateshead, much smaller places, where respectively only 31 and 32 men are required, the maximum wage is 28s.?

Mr. HANBURY: It is true that some of the town postmen at Lincoln are in receipt of pay rising on scale to a maximum of 28s. a week; but there was no ground for retaining an exceptional scale there, and the postmen appointed since 1891 are not entitled to a higher maximum than 26s. At Gateshead, on account of its close proximity to Newcastle, the postmen's force is practically on the same footing as that of the Newcastle Office. The scales at Preston, Dundee, and Southampton rise, as stated by the hon. Member, to 26s., a maximum which is based on the ordinary rates, which vary with the population of the district concerned.

JAMAICA (PORT ROYAL) DOCKYARD.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty whether he can state what was the total number of officers and men employed in, and the total cost for the year 1896-97, of Jamaica (Port Royal) Dockyard, and of Jamaica (Port Royal) Hospital respectively; whether he can state the cost of freight of stores sent to this dockyard in that year; whether there is any dock at this dockyard, and has any ship or boat ever been built there; and, if so, when; how many of Her Majesty's ships used the dockyard during the year for purposes of repair, and what was the nature and the total value of those repairs; whether there are any appliances in the dockyard for effecting repairs to machinery, such as foundries or fitting shops; what number of seamen and Marines were in the hospital for treatment during the year, and what number of soldiers; and whether, seeing that Admiral Sir J. Ommaney Hopkins in 1893 recommended that Port Royal should not be continued as a dockyard, the late Board or the present Board of Admiralty have taken any, and if so what, steps in consequence of that recommendation?

The CIVIL LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Worcestershire, E.): The total number of officers and men employed at Jamaica Dockyard and Hospital respectively in 1896-97 is 79, at a cost of £7,971, and 22 at a cost of £2,725. The freight of stores in 1896-97 amounted to £842. There is no dock there. No ship, pulling or sailing boat has been built there, but one coaling lighter was built in 1893-94 and another in 1896-97. Four of Her Majesty's ships used the dockyard during 1896-97 for repairs, which cost altogether £386. There are foundries, fitting shops, and machines capable of effecting ordinary repairs to machinery. In 1896 135 seamen and marines and 326 soldiers, including officers, were under treatment in the hospital. Sir J. O. Hopkins reported in 1893 that it was questionable whether the establishment should be maintained in its then condition, and a local committee was appointed to consider how the establishment might best be reduced, but on receipt of their Report the Admiralty decided to make no change. The Board of Admiralty are not prepared to close this most important station, but they have for some time past been considering whether further facilities for repairs to ships on the station ought not to be provided. The whole subject is occupying their serious attention.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES asked whether the hon. Gentleman would lay upon the Table the Report of Admiral Sir J. Ommaney Hopkins, made in 1893, in which he recommended that Port Royal should not be continued as a dockyard?

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said that he could not lay such a document upon the Table, because it would be against all precedent to do so.

ROADS IN BURGHS (SCOTLAND).

MR. T. H. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether, in the Minute of 26th August 1886, dealing with the distribution of grants in aid of roads in its application to burghs, the word "road" has an interpretation put upon it which operates to the prejudice of burghs; and whether counties can add roads and streets to the list of highways, and draw a share of grant in respect of the expenditure on these added roads, whilst burghs which have undertaken the management of their roads and streets cannot include in their claim for a share of the grant any expenditure on any road or street which was not a turnpike or statute labour road; if so, whether he can amend the Minute to remedy the hardship?

***THE LORD ADVOCATE** (Mr. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire): It is the fact, as stated in the Question, that in counties the distribution of the grant is made in respect of all roads maintained out of public rates, whereas in burghs it is only made in respect of roads which form part of a highway which was, subsequent to 1850, a turnpike road or a county road maintained by statute labour out of the rates levied under a Country Road Act. The regulations under which the grant in aid of roads is thus distributed were framed in 1884, after careful consideration, and are stereotyped in accordance with Section 22 Sub-section (2) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1889, and cannot be amended without legislation.

ARMY MAJORS (COMPULSORY RETIREMENT).

SIR JOHN DORINGTON (Gloucester, Tewkesbury): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether it is the intention to raise the age for compulsory retirement of Majors who have been selected as seconds in command to 51 years?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): There is no such intention; but, under Article 106 of the Pay Warrant, a Major second in command, who is considered eligible to succeed to the command of a battalion, may be retained in the service beyond the age of 48 years for such period as is thought desirable.

IRISH MAIL SERVICE.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether, in view of the new time table, it is possible to arrange for a night mail train to leave Belturbet and Cavan for Clones, instead of sending the night mails as at present by car, which necessitates their departure from Cavan at 6 p.m., and Belturbet 6.45 p.m.; and whether, in the representations at present being made to the Great Northern Railway Company, the consideration of this matter could be included; and, if so, will the further question of an extension of the times for posting letters in Cavan, Arva, Killeshandra, Belturbet, Ballyconnell, and Bawnboy be also considered.

MR. HANBURY: Although a new time table is being framed, the desired improvement in the night mail dispatch from Belturbet and Cavan could only be arranged by the establishment of additional trains which are not required for ordinary traffic, and the cost of establishing such trains would be altogether prohibitive. In the circumstances the Postmaster General does not think it expedient to include this matter in the representations at present being made to the Great Northern Railway Company.

WORKMISTRESSES (IRISH NATIONAL SCHOOLS).

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state to the House the nature of the representations made to the Education Commissioners on the subject of improving the conditions of service as to salary and results fees of workmistresses in National Schools; and whether any reply to these representations has been received; and, if so, can he lay upon the Table the whole correspondence on the subject?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: If the Question of the hon. Member has reference to representations made to the Commissioners within the past six months, I can only repeat what I stated on Friday, 12th instant, that representations have been made within that period respecting the fees payable to workmistresses, but none dealing specially with the salaries of these officers. Prior to this period, however, proposals were made to the Commissioners in favour of an augmentation of salaries as well as fees, and it was also suggested that the average daily attendance of girls in schools in which workmistresses are recognised should be reduced from 20 to 15. The reply to these various communications was that the proposal would be considered by the Commissioners. It would be contrary to established practice to lay this correspondence on the Table of the House.

LOAN FUND SOCIETIES (IRELAND).

DR. McDONNELL (Queen's Co., Leix): I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether, since the publication of the last Report of the Loan Fund Board, Lord de Vesci has made any further offer in settlement of the very serious claim disclosed in the correspondence printed in that report, in view of the fact that it appears from the correspondence that his father, the late Lord de Vesci, being, as trustee of the Abbeyleix Loan Fund, in possession of two sums of £887 18s. 11d. and £1,488, which had been duly appropriated for the charitable purposes of erecting labourers' cottages and a fever hospital, spent the money in erecting buildings on lands held from himself on yearly tenancy or on short leasehold; that, although his agent undertook that this land should be conveyed to trustees for the perpetual benefit of the poor, this undertaking was never carried out; and that the present Lord de Vesci claims to deal with the buildings as his own property; whether, if no settlement has been arrived at, Mr. Attorney General will proceed *ex officio* in the Chancery Division against the legal personal representative of the late Lord de Vesci?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. ATKINSON, Londonderry, N.): Since the date of the Report referred to, Lord de Vesci has not made any further offer of compromise. The facts mentioned in the Question are stated by the Loan Fund Board in the course of the correspondence, but are disputed by Lord de Vesci, and I am not aware what proof of them, if any, is now forthcoming after the lapse of a period of 54 years. I am carefully considering whether there is now any claim against Lord de Vesci which can be enforced by law.

MR. VESEY KNOX (Londonderry): May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman is also considering whether there is a claim against the personal representatives of Lord de Vesci apart from what claim there may be against his landlord?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND: There can be no possible claim against the landlord. The question is, what claim there is against the personal representative of Lord de Vesci?

EXPERIMENTS ON LIVING ANIMALS.

MR. J. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the inspectors appointed for the purpose of securing a compliance with the provisions of 39 and 40 Vict., c. 77, to visit places licensed for the practice of vivisection, have hitherto been persons who either have practised vivisection in the past, or shown the strongest sympathy with the practice of vivisection; are there any of those inspectors who are opposed to the practice of vivisection; and whether he will consider the advisability of not confining the inspection of licensed places for vivisection to inspectors who are advocates of the system?

*SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: The inspectors have been appointed by my predecessors without regard to their advocacy of, or opposition to, the system established by statute, under which experiments may be performed on living animals. If occasion arises, I shall pursue the same policy. The scientific knowledge required in an inspector implies a knowledge of experiments on animals; and I am satisfied that the inspection is carried out with the strictest regard to the law, and to considerations of humanity.

MR. MACNEILL: Will the right hon. Gentleman tell me whether all these inspectors are advocates of vivisection? I am told they are. Will he answer the question, yes or no?

*SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: I have said they are all acquainted with the method of conducting these experiments, but I am not able to say whether they are advocates of the law as it stands, or desire any change in it. I am persuaded that you cannot possibly examine and test whether operations are conducted according to law unless you employ professional gentlemen who know something about the matter.

MR. MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been directed to the account in the Press of a *soirée* to which 400 guests were invited in honour of the completion of the new laboratories in connection with St. George's Hospital Medical School, the report stating that in the physiological laboratory were displayed illustrations of new methods employed in the serum diagnosis of cholera and diphtheria; and whether St. George's Hospital has a licensed laboratory for the performance of experiments on the bodies of living animals; and, if so, why has not this hospital been included in the last return of places licensed for vivisection?

*SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: I have seen a newspaper account of the reception referred to, but do not gather from it that anything illegal took place. There is no licensed laboratory at St. George's Hospital.

CHILDREN'S METROPOLITAN ASYLUMS BOARD.

MR. H. H. BEMROSE (Derby): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, with reference to the proposed Order for a new sick children's board, how many replies have been received from boards of guardians and managers, and how many of these express approval of the Order as it stands?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. HENRY CHAPLIN, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): Since the date of the conference I have received communications from seven boards of guardians out of 30, and two school districts out of six. Three out of the seven boards of guardians either approve the Departmental Order or suggest as an alternative that the Metropolitan Asylums Board should take charge of the cases. One board of guardians prefers the Metropolitan Asylums Board if there is to be any change at all, to which it is opposed. Another suggests that the classes referred to should be assigned to some school or groups of schools, and the remaining two object. Of the two school districts, one approves and the other objects.

MR. FLOWER (Bradford, W.): Would the right hon. Gentleman mind laying the replies received from the boards of guardians on the Table?

[Mr. CHAPLIN signified assent.]

MR. T. LOUGH (Islington, W.): Does the right hon. Gentleman propose to wait for the reply of the other boards before he proceeds with the scheme?

[No answer was given.]

CRETE.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it is the case, as stated in the declaration read by M. Hanotaux from the tribune of the French Corps Législatif, that Greece addressed to the Powers several proposals of compromise, including one for the administration of Crete under the suzerainty of the Porte?

*MR. CURZON: Her Majesty's Government are not aware of any proposals in the nature of compromise having been addressed by Greece to the Powers, beyond that contained in the supplementary note of March 10, which has already been laid before Parliament.

*SIR C. DILKE: Has the right hon. Gentleman looked at the words employed by M. Hanotaux?

*MR. CURZON: I have.

*SIR C. DILKE: They are very clear on that subject.

*MR. CURZON: The French Minister of Foreign Affairs said that communications had been made to him, and I assume that they were made to him by the Greek Minister in Paris. What I said was that we have not received them here.

MR. MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Turkey is to be allowed to take part in the blockade of Crete; and whether Turkish ships will be permitted to enter Cretan ports during the blockade?

*MR. CURZON: Turkey does not take part in the blockade. It has been notified and is enforced by the Admirals of the Great Powers. Turkish merchant vessels will be permitted to enter Cretan ports under the same restrictions as other merchant vessels.

MR. MACNEILL: As Crete is at present an integral part of the Turkish Empire, do I understand that Turkey is debarred from blockading herself? [*Laughter.*]

[No answer was given.]

MR. MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the prohibition to the ships of the Great Powers and neutral nations entering Cretan ports to land goods intended for the interior applies only to goods for the Greek forces in Crete, who only occupy the district of Sphakin, or to the cutting off of the remaining nine-tenths of the island from the means of subsistence; and whether the Government have considered that the effect of this prohibition, if enforced in its entirety, will be to prevent the Christians in the interior of Crete, already reduced to want by the failure of last year's harvest, from receiving food while the Moslems of the towns are enabled to import whatever commodities they please?

*MR. CURZON: The application of the rules of blockade is left to the discretion of the Admirals, who will, no doubt, take care that they do not press with unnecessary severity on the peaceably disposed portions of the population of either creed.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: May I ask whether the offence of breaking the blockade will, as in other blockades, extend to the whole of the voyage?

*MR. CURZON: I am very glad to say that I am not an authority on international law.

SIR ELLIS ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Turkey and Greece have been desirous of entering into direct negotiations for the settlement of the Cretan question; and whether the Great Powers have objected to such direct negotiations; and, if so, on what ground this objection has been taken?

*MR. CURZON: Her Majesty's Government are not aware of any such desire having been shown, or of any objections having been raised by any of the Great Powers.

QUEEN'S JUBILEE PROCESSION.

SIR JOHN BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the action of certain landlords on the line of route of Her Majesty's procession through South London, who are taking proceedings for the eviction of their tenants, with the view of letting their houses for large sums on the occasion of the celebration of Her Majesty's Jubilee; and whether he proposes to take any action in the matter? I also wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman a Question of which I have given him private notice. It is whether the magistrates would have the power to adjourn their decisions until after June 22?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member brought that Question to the Table, and was there told that it was out of order. [*Laughter.*] If he was not satisfied, he should have appealed to me.

SIR J. BRUNNER: I am sorry, Sir. I thought a Question on the present state of the law would be in order, and beg you to believe that I would not do anything contrary to your ruling. [*Laughter.*] I would now like to ask the Home Secretary whether he would permit me to hand to him a copy of a notice which has been given to me to-day, and has been addressed to several tenants on this line of route, which is headed,

"*Re* Approaching Celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, to be held in June. I have been offered a sum——"

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member is not asking for information, but whether he may be permitted to hand a document to the Home Secretary. Of course, he is permitted to hand it without asking leave. [*Laughter.*]

MR. C. J. DARLING (Deptford): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, in answering the Question, he will at the same time answer a Question of mine on the Notice Paper, although, without any authority from me, it has been put down for Thursday? It differs from the present Question in this respect, that it asks whether the Home Secretary or the Government could in any way divert the route as at present arranged, so as to contravene any scheme of this kind which may have been resolved upon? [*Cheers.*]

SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: In answer to the hon. Baronet opposite, I have no particular information on the subject. I have noticed, of course, the rumours which have been reported in the newspapers, but I have no authority whatever to take any action in the matter; and, with reference to any subsidiary Question, if I am in order in replying, I would say I think it would be highly improper on my part to indicate to any magistrate in London the course which he might take in any proceedings which might be instituted. As regards the Question of my hon. and learned Friend behind me, the Home Office has no power whatever to settle what route Her Majesty may be disposed to take in making her procession through London.

ROYAL NATIONAL LIFEBOAT INSTITUTION (SELECT COMMITTEE).

SIR WILLIAM HOULDSWORTH (Manchester, N.W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the Select Committee to be appointed to inquire into the administration of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution will be precluded by the terms of reference from receiving evidence in regard to the Lifeboat Saturday organisation for raising funds towards the maintenance of the Institution?

MR. C. E. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will consider the advisability of extending the terms of reference to the Select Committee on the administration of the National Lifeboat Institution so as to include an inquiry into the management of the Lifeboat Saturday Organisation, which is now part of the National Lifeboat Institution, and has directly and indirectly increased its income to a great extent?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. C. T. RITCHIE, Croydon): Perhaps the hon. Member for the Northern Division of Manchester will allow me to answer his Question at the same time as that of the hon. Member for the North West Division of Manchester. It will, of course, be for the Committee to decide what matters come within the reference. For myself I should say that the reference would include all questions connected with the administration of the funds of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution; and, therefore, so far as the raising and expenditure of the Lifeboat Saturday organisation is associated with the administration of the Lifeboat Institution, it would seem to fall within the scope of the Inquiry.

SIR W. HOULDSWORTH: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Saturday organisation is considered in some quarters the most important part of the administration of the institution?

MR. RITCHIE: I did not understand that it was considered as the most important part of the Inquiry. So far as it bears on the work of the National Lifeboat Institution, it will be included in the Inquiry.

SIR R. U. PENROSE FITZGERALD (Cambridge): Inasmuch as the institution are anxious for the fullest and most searching inquiry, is the right hon. Gentleman of opinion that the Committee may inquire into the Saturday fund movement?

MR. RITCHIE: I understand that it is certain that the collection of funds on

Saturdays is connected with the administration of the institution, and, if that is the case, it will, of course, fall within the scope of the Inquiry.

LOCAL LOANS.

MR. KNOX: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what was the total amount of instalments of local loans in Great Britain, falling due during the year 1896, which were not paid until they had been a month or more overdue, or which still remain unpaid; and whether any sum was exacted in any of those cases by way of receivers' fees?

MR. HANBURY: The Public Works Loan Board state that during the calendar year 1896 the amount overdue, but paid more than a month late, was £6,516, and there is a further amount of £6,286 still unpaid. There is no power to charge receivers' fees on the Board's loans. There is, of course, no loan corresponding to the Irish seed loans, where the locality does not bear the charge for interest, and has therefore no inducement to repay the loans.

MR. KNOX: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what was the total sum demanded during the year 1896 by way of receivers' fees on overdue instalments of local loans in Ireland; and what was the nature and cost of the services rendered in receiving these instalments?

MR. HANBURY: The Board of Works have not sent me, as they ought to have done, the figures for the year 1896, which is the period named in the Question. What I have are the figures for the financial year 1896-7 down to the 17th instant. The total amount collected as receivers' fees of 1s. in the pound during that period is £698 17s. 9d., representing arrears of about £14,000. The arrears cause an increase of the clerical and accounting work of the Department, and the cost is as a rule merged in the general cost of the Office, and cannot be stated separately. In the special case of the Suck Drainage, however, a local agent is employed in recovering the arrears, and is paid at a rate not exceding 5 per cent. on the sums collected.

BOGUS TELEGRAMS, IRELAND (ALLEGED).

MR. KNOX: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, what is the result of the inquiries which have been made as to the bogus telegrams sent to the Rev. D. Humphreys, P.P., Killenaule, on 4th February; whether he is aware that no telegram was dispatched from Clonmel on that date either to the Rev. D. Humphreys or to the person for whom it is alleged the telegram from Clonmel delivered to the Rev. D. Humphreys was intended; and what is the reason given by the postmaster at Clogheen for refusing information as to the alleged sender of the second telegram which purported to come from Clogheen?

MR. HANBURY: I learn that an officer was sent specially to Killenaule to give the explanation, but that Mr. Humphreys was not satisfied. The telegram in question, which originated at Clogheen, was really not addressed to that gentleman, but in course of transmission at an intermediate office some errors unfortunately occurred, and the name of the addressee and of the office of origin were altered. In consequence of these errors it was made to appear that the telegram came from Clonmel, and that it was intended for Mr. Humphreys. The postmaster of Clogheen is undoubtedly to blame for not at once answering the inquiry addressed to him by Mr. Humphreys. His omission, it is thought, was due to the confusion arising from the errors. The Postmaster General much regrets the annoyance to which Mr. Humphreys was subjected, and has given instructions that the cost of the three telegrams which he was led to send, be refunded.

ARMY PENSIONS.

CAPTAIN PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the generally admitted evils resulting from the payment of pensions and reserve pay to discharged soldiers in quarterly sums, and especially in view of the very strong statements as to the harmfulness of this system laid before the recent Select Committee on Retired Soldiers' and Sailors' Employment by the Superintendent of the Building Works Department of the War Office, and others, he will take the necessary steps to make these payments at least monthly, either through the Post Office or otherwise?

MR. BRODRICK: It has been repeatedly explained in this House that there would be serious disadvantages to well-conducted men in reducing the payment now made of three months in advance to one month, the larger sum having been counted on, while it is obvious that men who habitually squander their pension when received would have twelve occasions of excess instead of three in the year. The change would cost a very large sum.

PIERS AND BOATSLIPS (SCOTLAND).

*MR. J. McLEOD (Sutherland): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate (1) why the Vote in this year's Estimates in respect of the powers granted by Parliament under the West Highlands and Islands Act 1891, has been decreased by nearly one-half as compared with that of last year; and (2) whether he is aware that, in consequence, a large number of works in the form of piers and boatslips, which had received the necessary local sanction, and were awaiting the sanction of the Secretary for Scotland, will now have to be abandoned?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE: As regards the first part of the hon. Member's question, the Estimates for 1897-98 in respect of public works and communications in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland have been reduced in respect of steamer communication by £1,325, piers, harbours, and minor works by £6,761, roads by £2,550, and administration by £64, leaving the total sum voted at £25,500, as compared with £36,200 for 1896-97. The reply to the second part of the question is that, as the sum of £11,239 taken this year for piers, harbours, and minor works, will have to be devoted to the completion of those works already in course of construction, the Secretary for Scotland regrets that the execution of any fresh works must be postponed for the present.

*MR. McLEOD: May I ask the Lord Advocate the reason for this remarkable change of policy on the part of the Scotch Office?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE: I must ask my hon. Friend to put that Question to the Treasury.

CORK ASSIZES (JUDGES' MILITARY GUARD).

MR. MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention has been directed to the statements of the Lord Chief Baron and Mr. Justice O'Brien at Cork on Friday last, made from the Judicial Bench as Her Majesty's Commissioners of Assize, complaining of the absence of a military guard at their lodgings as a departure from constitutional usage; whether he is aware that the Sheriff of Cork made the usual requisition for a military escort on the 9th instant, and received a reply that the guard would be provided if the sheriff made arrangements for the accommodation of the men; whether that reply was given in consequence of a Treasury decision that the expense of providing a temporary guardhouse would not be admitted as a charge on the Civil or Military Vote; and whether, having regard to the fact that the Lord Chief Baron and Mr. Justice O'Brien have publicly challenged the legality of that said decision, the Treasury will adhere in future to the ancient usage of supplying the expenses of a military guard at the Judges' lodgings.

MR. HANBURY: My attention has not been drawn to the remarks referred to, and I am not aware of any legal requirement in the matter. There is no such usage in England and Scotland, where the duty is efficiently performed by the police, and occasionally by the javelin-men of the Sheriff. The requisition stated to have been made by the Sheriff of Cork, and the reply which he received, have not been communicated to the Treasury. The Treasury have expressed no opinion as to charging this expenditure on the Military Votes, but the costs of the Military guard clearly ought not to fall upon the Civil Votes.

MR. CARSON: May I ask whether the saving to the Treasury has been 14s. 6d.?

MR. HANBURY: It is not a Treasury question at all; it is a question for the War Office.

MR. MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland (1) whether his attention has been called to the serious strictures of the Lord Chief Baron and Mr. Justice O'Brien, at the Cork Assizes, on Friday last, on the withholding, in consequence of a Treasury decision, of the Military guard at the

Judges' lodgings, a proceeding which both the learned Judges characterised as illegal; (2) whether a Sheriff is entitled to the services of the Military in furtherance of his duties; (3) whether it was incumbent on the authorities to place at the Sheriff's disposal a Military guard for the lodgings of the Judges at Assizes when requested by him so to do; (4) whether he is aware of any previous departure from this practice; and (5) whether there is any and, if so, what remedy against the Treasury for this proceeding, which has been declared by both the learned Judges to be a flagrant violation of the law?

*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND: There is no official Report of the language used by the Lord Chief Baron and Mr. Justice O'Brien on the occasion referred to, but judging from the report contained in the local newspapers there appears to be no doubt that both the learned Judges decided, on the best consideration they could give to the point at assizes, that the Military Authorities were bound to furnish the guard required to the Judges, representing, as they held they did, Her Majesty under their Commission. This Question only appeared on the Paper this morning. It is rather an abstract one, and I am not in a position to express an opinion on the legal points put to me in the second, third, and fifth paragraphs, even if it were proper I should do so after the decision referred to. In answer to the fourth paragraph, I am not aware of the practice ever having been previously departed from.

MR. MACNEILL: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he has read unofficially the statements made from the Bench; and whether it is true that Mr. Justice O'Brien thence denounced the Treasury as a demon of parsimony?

MR. CARSON: Is it a fact, as stated in the papers, that the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland has said this is a matter which has arisen by reason of the action of the Treasury?

*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND: No; I do not think the Lord Lieutenant actually said this had arisen from Treasury action. I think he did state that the matter arose by the action of the authorities, by which, I presume, he meant the War Office and the Treasury combined.

COUNTY COURT JUDGE (FERMANAGH AND MONAGHAN).

MR. D. MACALEESE (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state the reasons which induced the Irish Government to remove Judge Orr from the County Monaghan; and, who will be Judge Orr's successor in the County Monaghan?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: Judge Orr, until recently County Court Judge of Fermanagh and Monaghan, has been transferred to fill the vacancy in the similar office for County Down, caused by the retirement of Judge Roche, and Mr. Walker Craig, Q.C., succeeds Judge Orr in Fermanagh and Monaghan.

LOCAL TAXATION.

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK (London University): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if his attention has been called to the Motion standing in the name of the hon. Member for West Islington, for 23rd March, and whether the Inquiry contemplated in that Motion is within the scope of the Inquiry of the Royal Commission now sitting on Local Taxation?

MR. CHAPLIN: I have communicated with the Commission on the subject of the Motion referred to, and the question will certainly come within the scope of their inquiry. The County Council, I understand, are to be heard on it very shortly.

BURGESS ROLL (KILKENNY).

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that, out of a population of nearly 12,000 there are only 247 voters on the present burgess roll of the borough of Kilkenny; and, whether he will take the opportunity, a Bill being now before Parliament to confirm a Provisional Order relating to Kilkenny, to sanction the introduction of a Clause into that Bill reducing the qualification of burgesses from £10 to £4, as was done last Session in the private Acts promoted by Drogheda and Waterford, and in the Provisional Order Confirmation Acts relating to Armagh, Belfast, Blackrock, and other places?

MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask you if it is not the case that the course suggested in the Question was ruled by you from the Chair to be out of order, on the occasion of the Second Reading of this Bill?

***MR. SPEAKER**: That is so. And it would be quite out of order for a Committee, or for the tribunal which, in the case of an unopposed Bill, takes the place of a Committee, to deal with the matter after I had ruled it out of order.

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: That being so, I have nothing further to add.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the Government will facilitate the passing of a Bill, if I introduce it, making this change in the franchise, as in the case of Belfast?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: No, Sir; I could not undertake to do that.

NECESSITOUS BOARD SCHOOLS BILL.

MR. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce their Measure dealing with necessitous School Boards before Easter?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): Yes, Sir; I have a very confident expectation of being able to introduce this Bill before Easter.

MORAY FIRTH (ILLEGAL FISHING).

MR. J. E. GORDON (Elgin and Nairn) asked the Lord Advocate a Question of which he had given him private notice—namely, whether information had been received at the Scottish Office of illegal fishing yesterday, in the protected waters of the Moray Firth; and what steps had been taken with regard to the matter?

***THE LORD ADVOCATE** said the Scotch Office had not heard anything of the Report in Question until it was communicated by his hon. Friend that morning. They at once telegraphed to the Fishery Board to take steps to meet the necessity which seemed to have arisen.

RIVERS POLLUTION PREVENTION BILL.

Second Reading deferred from Tomorrow till Wednesday 31st March.

RATING OF MACHINERY SUSPENSORY BILL.

Second Reading deferred from Tomorrow till Wednesday 7th April.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

Read a Second time, and committed for To-morrow, at Twelve of the Clock.

MOTIONS.

POLICE PENSIONS AND SERVICE.

Bill to amend the Police Acts with regard to pensions and service, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Schwann, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Vaughan-Davies, Mr. John Wilson (Durham), and Captain Norton; presented, and Read the First time; to be Read a Second time upon Tuesday, 6th April, and to be printed.—[Bill 172.]

POLICE APPOINTMENT AND PROMOTION.

Bill to amend the Police Acts with regard to co-operation between police forces, the powers of local authorities, and the appointment and promotion of police officers, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Schwann, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Vaughan-Davies, Mr. John Wilson (Durham) and Captain Norton; presented, and read the First time; to be Read a Second time upon Tuesday 6th April, and to be printed.—[Bill 173.]

COTTAGE HOMES.

Bill to authorise the provision of cottage homes for the aged deserving poor, ordered to be broubht in by Mr. John Hutton, Mr. Grant Lawson, Mr. Milbank, Mr. Joseph A. Pease, Mr. Wilson-Todd, and Mr. Wyvill; presented, and Read the First time; to be read a Second time upon Thursday, 29th April, and to be printed.—[Bill 174.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

CLERICAL INCOMES (TAXATION).

***MR. J. ROUND** (Essex, Harwich) called attention to the taxation of clerical incomes, and moved:—

> "That, in view of the distressed condition of many of the clergy whose remuneration is principally derived from tithe rent-charge, this House is of opinion that the burdens of local taxation borne by them are inequitable and excessive, and that the grievance is one that calls for substantial relief."

He said the subject was interesting and important to the clergy, and he hoped that every Member of Parliament who desired to see all classes of ratepayers contributing equitably to local burdens would also take an interest in his Motion. He had heard the income of the Church of England from tithe variously estimated at from four to six millions, but he wished to point out that the income from tithe rent-charge of the parochial clergy of the Established Church amounted to about two and a quarter millions at the time of the commutation, but now only to £1,725,000. No doubt if they took the income of the parochial clergy from all sources they would reach a total of some £3,165,000, but if that were divided among the incumbents each incumbent would receive only some £238. He believed that there were about 14,000 parishes in England and Wales, and that in more than half of them the income of the incumbent was less than £130 a year. In the year 1836 the payment of the clergy by tithe was commuted and the present tithe rent-charge substituted, which was based upon their average receipts from tithe during the seven previous years, and was caluculated at the then existing price of corn—wheat, 56s.; barley, 31s.; and oats, 22s. per quarter. He need not point out to the House the enormous fall that had taken place since that time in the value of cereals, and as a consequence the loss of income to the clergy by the depreciation of tithe rent-charge was very great indeed. He believed he was correct in saying that for the past seven years the income of the clergy from tithe rent-charge had only been 75 per cent. of what it was at the time of the commutation. In his own diocese of St. Albans, comprising Essex and Hertfordshire, the value of the tithe, when the tithe was commuted, was £201,543, while the present value of the tithe rent-charge was only £146,000. The gross income of the clergy of that diocese was £212,000, but the net income was only £148,000, or less than £230 a year for each incumbent. If he took eleven large livings in Essex in one Rural Deanery, each incumbent at the time of commutation would receive £586, whereas now his tithe, according to present averages, would be £436, and, subject to necessary outgoings, would only be £363. These figures showed that the income of the clergy at the present day was small, and was still diminishing. In the assessment of the tithe rent-charge to local burdens the clergy were allowed certain deductions before the rateable value was arrived at. They were allowed to deduct the actual amount of rates paid, any necessary ecclesiastical fees, the amount of repairs to the chancel, and 5 per cent. for the cost of collecting the tithe rent-charge; but they were obliged to pay rates upon the remainder of the tithe rent-charge. He wished to impress upon the House that they felt it a great grievance that they were not included in the benefits given to local ratepayers by the Agricultural Rates Act of last year. ["Hear, hear!"] There were a great many outgoings from the clergyman's pocket—moneys which never came to him as income—on which he was obliged to pay local rates. These were—repayments to Queen Anne's Bounty for money borrowed by a previous incumbent to provide the parish with a residence; the land tax, which was allowed to be deducted in the case of the income tax; and stipends of curates. He knew one living in his own county the gross income of which was £1,207, but the outgoings, which amounted to £613, brought it down to £585. In the case of another large living in Sussex the value of the tithe at the time of the commutation was £960; the present gross income was only £750; the outgoings amounted to £335 8s. 9d.; and therefore the net value of the living was only about £420. These outgoings were—income tax, £27 19s.; land tax, £31; rates, £109; repayments to Queen Anne's Bounty, £86; ecclesiastical fees, £1 17s.; and a curate's stipend, £78. Local taxes were therefore levied upon money which never came into the clergyman's hands, and he ventured to say that the clergyman was the only man in this country who was rated upon the whole of his professional income. That was the substance of the grievance which he had to bring before the House; and he hoped he should obtain the support of the House in the object he had in view. He had made mention of the few larger livings, as they showed distinctly the large amounts of burdens in rates and taxes, but the grievance was felt much more in the innumerable smaller livings. He would mention one or two more cases in his own county. There was one living where the tithe rent-charge was £455 a year; the average for the present year £338; the gross income from all sources £363, and the net income £250. The incumbent in this case complained that he was unable to deduct the land tax payable on the tithe, and that many rates had been added since the tithe commutation took place—such as the highway rate and the school rate. In one parish in the West of England this rate was 7s. 6d. in the pound. Then, in consequence of the great fall in the value of agricultural land, the assessment on land in some Unions had fallen 30, 40, or even more per cent; the tithe rent-charge was, of course, assessed at the full rateable value, and the consequence was that the rates were perhaps raised from 1s. 6d. or 2s. to 2s. or 2s. 6d. Consequently, the owner of the tithe rent-charge in those Unions had to pay a larger amount of rates, and had less income wherewith to pay it. Another case in his own district was that of an incumbent, who now paid £6 a year more in rates than he did ten years ago, while the tithe rent-charge was £127 less. In another case, the tithe rent-charge was £796, according to the commuted value; the average for last year's was £560; the incumbent paid income tax, £15; land tax, £42; rates, £73; Queen Anne's Bounty, £14; clergy fees, £2 10s.; total, £145. He also paid rates and taxes on his house to the extent of £45, leaving as net income £370. This left little, even in the big livings, for education and all the claims of a large parish. The clergy, too, had to contribute largely to the schools. It was impossible to say too much of the way in which the parochial clergy had devoted themselves to the management of their schools. [*Cheers.*] A letter was placed in his hands from a collector of tithes, who said:—

> "The distress among the clergy without private incomes is simply heartrending. There are many houses where the furniture and books have, by degrees, been sold to obtain the necessaries of life, simply through the living being eaten up by outgoings on rates and taxes."

At the Church Congress of 1895, Chancellor Blofield read an excellent paper on the position of the clergy in the Diocese of Norwich. He pointed out that of the 415 livings in the Diocese, the average income was only £125. He continued by saying that

> "this *res angusti domi*, with all its cares and anxieties, must often hinder the incumbent in his spiritual work, and take the heart out of him."

He had shown how overburdened the clergy were in regard to local taxation, and what he would suggest was this—that they should be allowed further legal deductions from the tithe rent-charge before it was assessed for its rateable value; that payment of Queen Anne's Bounty should not be takeu into account in the rateable value; and that payments of the land tax and payments for curates should be deducted. Further, as the clergy were the only class rated on their professional incomes, he asked that legal deductions should be made from the local assessment in that respect. Chancellor Blofield also said:—

> "We forbid the clergyman by law to eke out his income by secular pursuits; we compel him by law to perform certain duties; yet he is not rated equally, although equality is said to be the basis of the law of rating."

The Chancellor went on to suggest that in rating the tithe the incumbent should be allowed to deduct for all necessary expenses, and for his own services, say, at the lowest rate at which the Bishop would fix the stipend of a curate, in case of a non-resident incumbent. This was the suggestion he wished to bring especially before the Government. He hoped he had shown that the parochial clergy were not treated fairly in the matter of rating; and he hoped that he should receive some sympathy from hon. Gentlemen opposite as well as from Her Majesty's Government. [*Cheers.*] The Members of the Government must know better than any private Member of the House the real position of the clergy throughout the country. He begged to move his Resolution, and, while he thanked the House for their attention, he trusted that the claim of the clergy for just relief of local burdens would not be put before Parliament in vain.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY (Kent, Ashford) seconded the Motion. He said that it was only a limited one, and not so wide as he could have wished. Last week hon. Gentlemen opposite vied with each other in extolling the sacrifices of the rural clergy for education. It was for these men that he and his hon. Friend pleaded. Next week the House would be engaged in considering the question of the overtaxation of a portion of this United Kingdom. He would guarantee that the rural clergy as a class would easily prove that they were the most overtaxed entity in the land. Two causes called special attention to this matter now—the Rating Act and the Relief of the Land Tax, both Measures of relief to agriculture. He had not last year pleaded for the inclusion of the tithe in the Rating Act, which was an occupier's, not an owner's Act; but he did claim that, when others had been helped, there was no more deserving class than the clergy to help next; and that there was an apparent inequality created by the exclusion of tithe from the relief given to the soil. Then as to the land tax. Through the unfortunate action of the local Committees, in many parishes where a reassessment had been made the clergy, from having a large house and tithe rentcharge, which had not depreciated in rateable value as fast as agricultural land; had as a result been obliged to bear a larger proportion of the quota of land tax than on the old assessment—and this at a moment when they could ill afford any extra charge. On these grounds there was some special call for inquiry. Then what was the grievance? In the particular district he was best acquainted with in Kent the re-assessments had fallen very heavily on the clergy. Assessments in the rural parishes and farms had fallen very low, and the result had been that the actual proportion of the rates now paid by the clergy was very much larger than it used to be. Therefore it was that recent Measures intended for the relief of the agricultural districts had, perhaps unwittingly, operated to the prejudice of the clergy. The great ground upon which they must press their claim was, that the clergy were at present the only class in the country rated upon their professional income, that income being only a life interest for services rendered to the community. The whole tendency of recent legislation had been to fix what had been called a living wage, to relieve the mere means of livelihood from taxation; yet with the clergy they were heavily rated upon incomes far below the limit accepted for exemption from the income tax. He believed the average tithe rent-charge amounted to little more than £100 in each parish, and yet often the taxation for local purposes came to 30 per cent. of this amount. What should they hear if there was a large class in the manufacturing towns of hard-working people who had an income of £2 or £2 10s. a week, and had to pay an income to the State at the rate of one-third of that income? Essex was the county in all England where the matter had been felt most cruelly; but in Kent the tithe per acre was the heaviest of any county in England. It averaged nearly 5s. an acre. In that county the clergy were entirely, or to a large extent, dependent on the tithe rent-charge. In the diocese of Canterbury there was an average payment in stipends to curates of over £12,000, and on that sum the clergy had all to pay rates, although they never received a penny of the amount; and there was a further grievance which also pressed heavily on what were large livings in old days, but which were now very much reduced—namely, where grants had been fixed from a mother parish to a daughter parish. There was a case where a clergyman was bound to pay, out of an income reaching to £700 a year, £125 to a district church and £140 to a curate, and on the whole £265 he was rated to his own parish, so that he was actually paying in rates and taxes, although he did not receive the £265, £150 a year. Another vicar had a tithe which, in 1878, was reckoned at £450, and he then paid £60 in rates, or 2s. 9d. in the £. Owing to agricultural depression and the changes which had taken place in assessment, the rates had gone up enormously, and although now he was only receiving £290 instead of £450, he had now to pay £87, or at the rate of 6s. in the £. There were other cases no less striking, showing that in many of the smaller incomes the actual outgoings taken from the vicar amounted to 35 or 40 per cent. Many new rates had been imposed since commutation, such as the school rate, the new parish rate, and the sanitary rate, which, while it fell on agricultural land at the rate of one-fourth, had to be paid on the full gross value. What he would wish would be to see an absolute redemption of tithe by the assistance of the State, so that the poor rural clergy should obtain the same settled payments as had been obtained by the bishops and chapters in most cases; but, as this was beyond the region of practical politics, they might at least ask that a professional income should no longer be taxed away altogether, and that a minimum increase should be left to the clergy, which should be free from the ever-increasing demands and rapacity of the tax-collector. Further deductions from gross value might be allowed; perhaps the old precedent of land tax revived, and, in some other ways, their burdens lightened. To the Government they appealed, with a case of cruel hardship, for a class of men who, least of all, should be the most taxed of the community; and, trusting in their sense of justice, he was glad to second this Resolution.

*MR. CHARLES HARRISON (Plymouth) said that the grievance about which the hon. Member had spoken was not confined to the clergy. A grievance of a similar nature existed in a very much greater degree among the urban ratepayers and dwellers in towns. The clergy did not depend on rent-charge alone for their income. Most of the poorer livings were fed from Queen Anne's Bounty Fund and the revenues of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, the Receivers-General of the Church income, and the Church and the clergy stood in an exceptionally favourable position with regard to both Imperial and local taxation. Since commutation of tithes had taken place, Imperial taxation had immensely changed, and on all classes of real property there had been imposed, for the purposes of taxation, first the succession duty, afterwards converted into the Death Duties. But on the vast aggregation of realty belonging to the Church, not one penny of this Imperial taxation was contributed by it to the Exchequer. In ground rents alone the Church was deriving an income of £317,000 a year on a property which at the lowest valuation was equal to £9,000,000. The Church was deriving from beneficial rents in London—property in possession, including a considerable number of public-houses—a rental of £112,000 a year. The account of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners also showed that the Church was drawing in mining rents and royalties £346,000 a year, and from tithes no less than £254,000 a year. Not only did the Church possess that property vested in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, but in addition, there were glebes of 658,000 acres, producing a net rental of £908,000 a year. Many of these glebes had, by special Private Acts of Parliament, been authorised to be built upon, and in the north of England had been converted into building estates. All that vast property had not paid one penny to the Imperial Exchequer in respect of succession, which, had it belonged to a private individual or corporation other than the Church, would have paid that Imperial duty. In substitution for the Succession Duties, there was imposed the Corporation Duty, and the City Guilds and other Corporate bodies had now to pay a tax of five per cent. per annum upon their income, which was taken as being an equivalent substitute for the Succession Duty. In addition to these large sums there were something like 300,000 acres of agricultural land vested in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, spread over every part of England, and in respect of which not a penny was paid for Imperial taxation other than in respect of Property Tax and the local taxation where the tenants did not pay it. In the parish of Paddington there were 612 acres, with a rack rent of £900,000, and a ground rent of £150,000, owned by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and a third of the ground rents were now being received by them. The ground leases had the usual covenant that the tenant should pay all rates and taxes; so that in respect of that vast property, the rateable value of which must come to £300,000 or £400,000 a year, nothing but Property Tax was paid by the Church. When they found this vast aggregation of property exempt from all classes of contribution, whether urban or agricultural, deriving an immense income and paying nothing to the Imperial Exchequer, except corporation or Imperial duty as a substitute for Death Duty, he said that the Church occupied an extremely favourable position in respect of contributions to Imperial taxation. He turned next to the system of local taxation. There he found that a great area of property in the country already received Imperial grants in aid, contributed chiefly by the dwellers in towns, and that those who were lowest rated in respect of local taxation in the country received the highest amount per cent. of Imperial grant. The result was to convince him that country and local taxation in that area was the least taxed, and taxed at the expense of the towns—["oh, oh!"]—while receiving the largest amount of grant in aid from the Imperial Exchequer to the reduction of local rates. The tithe rent-charge obtained the benefit from this system in the amount for which they were rated. Take the case of Bedfordshire. From the local taxation there, the rate was 14·04 per cent. of the rateable value. How was it contributed? Twenty-five and a-half per cent. came from the Imperial Exchequer, and there was raised by local rates 74½ per cent. In other country places the same ratio prevailed. In Hunts the rate was 10·64 per cent.; the Exchequer contributed 28·67 per cent., and there was raised by rate 71·33 per cent. Now as to towns. Wolverhampton raised in local rates 33 per cent. on the rateable value; the Imperial Exchequer gave 15 per cent., and the balance of 84 per cent. fell on the town. The whole question was now being investigated upstairs before a Royal Commission; and when they came to local taxation it was found that the exemptions in favour of the Church had been marked throughout the whole history of that branch of the subject. Take the case of poor livings from 1806 to 1822. There existed a series of statutes which exempted poor livings up to £150 from the payment of Land Tax. Under those Acts, 2,140 livings were exempted, saving £7,343 a year of Land Tax. In 1836, when the Commutation of Tithes Act was passed, there was taken into account the rates that were then charged on property paying tithes. In the commuted sum and rent charge arrived at, there was added to the net amount of rent a sum which then represented the amount of tax imposed on the property; so that the rent charge represented at this day, not only the rent which was then paid, but also the amount of the rates. When the Act of 1836 was passed commuting for tithes in kind a fixed annual sum, to be ascertained on the prices of the day, according to the directions in that Act, the Commissioners, in fixing the original sum, ascertained the average net value of the tithes in kind for the six years preceding the Act, and added to that sum an amount to cover rates and taxes. ["No, no!"] Hon. Members seemed to doubt this, but he could cite numerous instances in Essex where the tithes were the highest. In Fairstead the money value of the tithes was ascertained to be £413, and the then taxes £77. The rent-charge fixed under the Act was £479. In Staple Tawney the money value of the tithe was £291, the taxes £66. The rent-charge was fixed at £350. In Fordham the money value was £567, the taxes £188; the rent-charge was fixed at £750. To give a further exemption now would be to give the relief twice over. On the theory that tithes are land, they had been placed in the exceptional position of land. With regard to its exceptions from special local rates, in that respect it was only assessed at one-third, and in towns at only one-fourth. The Church had had, in consequence, the advantages of tithes being treated as land, and from the year 1836 the tithe rent-charge was fixed on a certain basis, with the result that up till 1875 the £100 tithe rose and rose until, in 1875, it reached £112 15s. 6d., and between the year 1837 down to 1892, if they took this number of years by the average receipts, the tithe had yielded above par—£100 13s. 2d. So that in point of fact, by treating tithes as land, they had had the benefit of the exemptions which had been accorded to land. He thought he had made out a case that the Church was exceptionally favoured with regard not only to Imperial taxation, but also with regard to local taxation, and there seemed no reason why the particular class of property of the tithe rent-charger should receive any more especial favour than that which land and rental values had received. While sympathising with the shrinkage of the incomes of any particular class, and while he sympathised with the great and heavy burdens which were put, and oppressively put, on any particular class, he did venture to think that in this instance at all events the Church had been exceptionally favoured as compared with other classes, and particularly the urban ratepayer. If this subject was investigated before the Royal Commission the urban ratepayer would have the opportunity of urging these propositions in answer to the present Motion. He therefore opposed the Motion.

MR. T. USBORNE (Essex, Chelmsford) asked the House to have patience with him for a few minutes, while he stated why the grievance of the tithe owners had cropped up just now, what that grievance was not, what it was; were they a class to whose petition for redress of their grievance, if it existed, this House ought to turn a deaf ear; and if they were to redress the grievance, what it would cost. First of all, it had cropped up just now because of the Agricultural Rating Bill of last year. As soon as the tithe owners perceived the immediate relief of the land occupiers, and the eventual relief of the landowners, from which they were excluded, they felt, as they put it, that they had been treated most unjustly, and in his diocese of St. Albans a Committee of the clergy were appointed at the Diocesan Conference to meet the Members of the two counties forming the diocese—namely, Essex and Herts—to discuss with them what was best to be done to secure to them the advantages conferred on the other classes connected with the land. They met once or twice last Session, and he believed that the Members of this House present at those meetings thought that the tithe owner had been hardly dealt with—certainly he did. But after the receipt of numerous letters from clergymen, and after several discussions with Members of his own Party in this House, he came to the conclusion that they had not been unjustly treated by that Bill, and at their last meeting, held during this present Session, he told them so. He believed he persuaded them that they had not been unjustly treated, or, at all events, he persuaded them that it was useless their trying to persuade the majority of this House that they had been. Among the arguments he used was one to the effect that they must not compare their position with that of the land occupiers, but of the land owners, and then gave it as his opinion that the Bill of last year was admittedly a landlord's relief Bill, and not a tenant's. [*Opposition cheers.*] That statement of his, taken out and away from his speech, had been much quoted in opposition papers and on opposition platforms, of which he did not complain. He was not now going to discuss last year's Bill, and he was not going in for a personal explanation, because he did not consider any statement made by him of sufficient importance to justify his wasting the time of the House in any such way; but he might be allowed to say that he hoped that he was not the only Member of this House, who, in the heat of an argument, and owing to a desire to convince those he was addressing, had, on occasions, used words in excess of what he intended or ought to have used. Such words in this case were "and not a tenant's." He hoped he had explained to the House why this grievance had now cropped up, and what it was not—namely, omission from relief in last year's Bill. But what was it; for it certainly existed? Well, the tithe owner paid rates on the whole of the income derived from the tithe, although he received the income on condition of doing certain work and performing certain duties. That was to say, he was rated not only on that portion of the tithe which might be considered income from the property, but also on that portion which must be considered remuneration for work done; whereas, of the total income of land, shops, etc., only that portion was rated which represented rent, and not that portion which is, or at all events used to be, earned by the farmer as remuneration for his labour. The present grievance was therefore really this, that the clergy of the Church of England—he cared only for the very poor ones—were the only class rated on their pay or earnings. Now could they disregard this grievance? Could this class of men continue under present distressing circumstances—he alluded to the reduction in the value of the tithe and the increase in the rates they had to pay, owing to the greatly lowered assessment of the land—to pay in rates and taxes a larger percentage of their incomes than any class in a similar position? He did not think that any Member of this House would wish to turn a deaf ear to their complaint; certainly not those who knew, as he knew, of the several families in agricultural districts who at the present moment had not enough to eat, and had not for some few years had a domestic servant in their house. He now came to the last question; what would be the cost? This mainly depended upon what they valued the amount of work, etc., that they did. He would be very modest on their behalf, and would ask the House to put it at £2 a week all round; in other words, he would ask the Government to relieve them of the rates on the first £104 of their tithe. He did not ask for a percentage of relief to every tithe owner. He asked that every man, whatever his receipt be, should be relieved to the same extent. This course would, for the money that had to be found, relieve the small tithe owners to a far greater extent than a percentage of relief would do. But it might fairly be asked, "what will be the total cost of your modest demand?" It was not easy to arrive off-hand at an exact amount, but the figure that he considered the most likely was £110,000 a year. The lower the figure at which the relief was fixed, the more would it cost the country per pound of relief absolutely given, because there were so many small tithe owners who would not participate in the whole relief, even up to £104 a year, and there would be fewer still if a higher figure were fixed upon. He would conclude by urging the Government to listen to their appeal, and to grant to these necessitous and highly-educated men liberally, but above all, speedily, such relief as in their judgment the necessity of the case required.

Mr. ELLIS GRIFFITH (Anglesey) said they had now had an appeal made to them on the ground of the necessitous and highly-educated character of the clergy—in fact, both institutions which had been so much in fashion of late with hon. Gentlemen opposite seemed to be in a very necessitous state. It was very curious that the clergy of the richest Church in Christendom should come to the House of Commons, and ask for a dole. Let him call attention to the wording of the Motion:—

> "In view of the distressed condition of many of the clergy, whose remuneration is principally derived from tithe rent-charge, this House is of opinion that the burdens of local taxation borne by them are inequitable and excessive, and that the grievance is one that calls for substantial relief."

He assumed it was not intended that the benefit contemplated should be given to the clergy as a whole, but only to those whose incomes were derived mainly from tithe rent-charge, and only to those so deriving their incomes who were in a distressed condition. That would set up a very curious and a new principle in taxation. Who was to be the judge of distressed condition? Reference had been made to a net income of £360. What a princely income £360 would be considered by many Nonconformist ministers, who did their work as honestly and efficiently as any clergyman of the Church of England. Yet they did not come to Parliament and ask for relief. [An hon. Member: "They are not taxed as high."] However highly taxed the Church of England clergymen might be, they got a net income of £360, and, therefore, they were not a class to be viewed with special favour in a matter of this kind. It was right to examine how the commutation was fixed in the first instance. Originally the commutation included not only the tithe rent-charge, but the rates and taxes. [*Cries of* "No!"] In *The Times* of the 26th of May there was a letter giving three instances in Essex in which the commutation included the rates and taxes. He did not know whether those were exceptional cases or not, but by the inclusion of the rates and taxes a material difference was introduced into the argument. Don't let them forget that, whether rates and taxes were included or not, up to 1892—from 1836 to 1892—the average was above par. Was it to be said that because in the last five years the shoe had pinched, clergymen were entitled to come to the House of Commons and ask for substantial sympathy? Reference had been made to the Act of 1891. It was rather hard on the Conservative Government that they should be told that that Act was a bad one.

MR. HARDY said he did not say that the Act was a bad one, but that the circumstances which were contemplated at the time the Act was passed had changed.

MR. ELLIS GRIFFITH thought that the circumstances were much more favourable to the clergyman, as it was not the poor farmer but the landowner who was responsible for the payment of tithe. Since the passing of the Act of 1891 there had been very few bad debts in respect of tithe rent, for there was absolute security for its being paid. The assessment, too, had been higher, because the cost of collection had been lighter. Hon. Members would agree with him that the real question they had to consider was, Did clergymen pay a greater share of the taxation of the country than they ought to do? ["Hear, hear!"] The Motion only referred to local burdens, but it was necessary to pay heed to Imperial taxation. Of the latter there were three items—the income tax, indirect taxation, and the succession duty. [AN HON. MEMBER: "And the land tax."] As to the income tax, the clergyman was no worse off than anybody else, and as to indirect taxation he had only himself to blame if he contributed too much. He imagined that spirits and tobacco were commodities not consumed in very large quantities by the clerical party. [*A laugh.*] Succession duty was paid by clergymen as individuals; the income of the rectory did not contribute it. Land tax he put under the head of local taxation, and from it clergymen were exempted from 1806 to 1820. Since 1820 they had paid it like all other owners of land, and if they had the security of land for their incomes they must pay the penalty. He admitted that for the purposes of the poor rate the clergy were assessed at the full value of the tithe rent-charge, and the reason was that they had such a splendid security for their property. As to other rates, tithe rent-charge was on the same footing as land; it was assessed at one-third its value. Under the Public Health Act, 1875, it was on a very favourable footing, as it was exempted from three-fourths of its full value. As to a remedy, he ventured to submit one which he regarded as based on the best and closest precedent. The real remedy for the present state of affairs was a compulsory association of poor clergy—[*laughter*]—no, not of poor clergymen, but of all clergymen, including the Archbishops and Bishops. They should all form this compulsory association, of course quite voluntarily. [*Renewed laughter.*] Having formed compulsory associations in the manner he had indicated, they would grow in that spontaneous way which the Vice President of the Council had said would happen in respect to another matter, and once they had grown spontaneously by the will of the clergy just as other associations were to grow by the will of the people, these things would adjust themselves, and the necessitous clergyman would have his income increased. What more Christian than that the richer clergymen should aid their poorer brethren?

CAPTAIN PRETYMAN (Suffolk, Woodbridge) said he thought it would be accepted as a sound principle that men should contribute in taxation in proportion to their ability to pay, and if he could show that, as a whole, the clergy were taxed, both in regard to local and Imperial taxation, in a larger proportion than the rest of the community, he thought he would have made out a case to go before the House. They did not come to the House *in formâ pauperis*; they did not ask for a dole because they were distressed. If they took up that ground, they would be told that, although they were distressed, there were many classes who were even more distressed than they. What he and others asked was that the clergy should not bear more taxation than their fair share. The hon. Member who Seconded the Motion had brought forward several cases of exceptional hardship, and it would have been noticed that on the whole the clergy paid at the rate of 5s. in the pound. Take a case which was present to his mind of a living which was in two parishes, the income of which was £320 a year. Out of that a curate had to be paid, and £80 went in taxation. This was a typical case, and it was just 5s. in the pound, which, generally speaking, would be rather below than above the mark. On the basis of ability to pay as measured by the income tax, the amount would be 1s. 10½d. in the pound. This showed that the clergy were bearing an undue proportion. The suggestion of the hon. Member who had just spoken was that the clergy, those who were well off and those who were not, should all compulsorily combine into voluntary associations. He feared that remedy would not commend itself to the clergy. [*Ironical cheers.*] He might draw a parallel from the payment of Members. It would just be as reasonable for the hon. Member to propose, as many hon. Members were in favour of that scheme, that they should pool their interests. ["Hear, hear!"] He thought that was not an unfair parallel. What he wished to impress on the House was that the burden of taxation fell on the clergy with absolutely exceptional severity. With regard to the remedies, a Commission was now sitting dealing with the whole question of local taxation, and it would be difficult to deal with this question until that Commission had reported. They pointed out the grievance, and they left it to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, than whom no one was better able to grapple with it, to do the best he could. He thought the House might pass the Resolution, which dealt with no party question. ["Hear, hear!"]

*MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Notts, Mansfield) said he approached this question not only with sympathy but pain at the thought that the clergy of the august Church of England should be the only ministers of religion to come to that House *in formâ pauperis.* [*Cries of* "Hear, hear!" *and* "No, no!"] They had the Agricultural Rating Bill last Session, and there was nothing more natural than that the clergy, who also derived their income from the land, should make an appeal in their turn. There was no doubt that many of the clergy, who were hard working, devoted men, were miserably ill-paid, but what about the remedy for that state of things? If the suggested remissions were granted, there would be a deficit which would have to be supplied; so that they would have increased taxation in one direction, while it would be made lighter in another direction. It would also be an addition to what the Church would receive from the Education Bill. Was it likely that the laity would respond liberally to the appeals now being made to them on behalf of the clergy, if the House granted additional endowments to them in the form suggested by the Motion? The clergy in the towns who depended on pew rents and offertories had not suffered from agricultural depression, and he did not suppose that the bishops, or the higher ranks of the clergy, had suffered in any degree. Why were the clergy in their present strait? It was because they had relied on State-endowments for support, instead of on the willing offerings of those to whom they ministered. Those endowments were now shrinking, and there was no adequate substitute. Many Churchmen had now become conscious of the disastrous effects of these endowments. One Churchman had said that "the close-fisted parsimony of the present is excused by the open-handed generosity of the past." Another, that "the want of willingness on the part of the laity to give liberally for Church work is because they have so much provided for them." A third acknowledged that "Churchmen, in doing spiritual work, have made the mistake of relying upon the dead hand of the past; and are pauperised by the endowments bequeathed by their ancestors." The ill work of the past in that respect had to be undone; and the clergy would find that the true remedy for their present necessities was to be found in reliance upon the affection and liberality of their flocks, and on the power of the great Gospel which it was the business of their lives to preach. [" Hear, hear ! "]

Colonel MILWARD (Warwick, Stratford-on-Avon) said the hon. Member opposite had said that the clergy were suing that night *in formâ pauperis*, and the hon. Member for Anglesey said that they were asking for a dole. He denied each of those propositions. Those who supported the Motion came forward on a question of right. They based the Motion upon the rate on tithe, and they felt there they had a very strong case. The rate on tithe stood in a very different position from any other rate. Rent was generally the basis on which rates were levied, but in the case of tithe the rate was levied on production. Rent bore to production the proportion of one-third or one-fifth. Therefore, when a rate was levied on production, it was three or five times as much as a rate levied on rent. [" Hear, hear ! "] They desired also to emphasise very strongly the point that it was a rate on a professional income, and there was no other instance in which a rate was levied on a professional income. He would take an instance from each of the counties of Warwick, Worcester, Leicester, and Hereford. In Warwickshire he found a case in which the gross income of the living was £155 12s. 1d., and the actual taxation £30 6s. 4d. In Worcestershire there was a case in which the gross income was £690 7s. 5d., and the actual taxation £148 17s. 1d. In Leicestershire, on a gross income of £339 5s. 4d., £71 11s. 2d. had to be paid in taxation ; while in Herefordshire, on a gross income of £530 14s., £58 13s. 8d. had to be paid in taxation. And all these livings were subject to many other reductions, such as the payment of curates, pensions, and so on. Thus, in the Worcestershire case, though the gross income was £690 7s. 5d., the net income was only £301 5s. 4d. In the Leicestershire case, with a gross income of £339 5s. 4d., the net income was £246 8s. 8d. ; and in the Herefordshire case the gross income of £530 14s. was reduced to a net income of £148 2s. 0d. The proportion of income paid in taxation was in the Warwickshire case 19 per cent., in the Worcestershire case 20 per cent., in the Leicestershire case 21 per cent., and in the Herefordshire case 11 per cent. Another strong point was that the clergy were not represented in that House. There was no other class of Her Majesty's subjects that could not have direct representation in Parliament. It was true that they were represented in the other House by the bishops in many ways, but on any question of taxation or hardship they must come to the House of Commons. Therefore, he ventured to ask the House to deal tenderly and gently with persons so situated, and to ask for them the sympathetic attention of the Government. [" Hear, hear ! "]

Mr. AUGUSTINE BIRRELL (Fife, W.) thought it was rather a shame that hon. Gentlemen opposite should have made their speeches in the House rather than by way of deputation to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because it was clear that they did not really propose to do more than to put the case of the poor clergy before the right hon. Gentleman, and did not seriously expect him to make any promise binding himself or his successors. He only rose for the purpose of making one observation. The strong case of the Church—a case which rendered it most invulnerable in the eyes of the people—was that it was an institution in the possession of its own property, and in no way deriving its revenue from the State. That was an honest and a formidable argument. But if clergymen thought that they ought to pay less in taxation, and came to that House asking that they might be put on a different footing from the rest of the community—[*Ministerial cries of* " No," *and* " Hear, hear ! "]—very many other people who thought that they were in the same plight would at once ask that the law should be altered in their favour also, so that they, too, should be exempted from the payment of certain taxes. He sympathised as much as any man could with the distressed clergy, and miserable indeed must be the mental condition of the man who did not recognise that the lives of the clergy were almost without exception devoted to what they believed to be the public good. When they found clergymen who were dependent on charity for the clothing, and sometimes for the food, of their children, of course, pity was excited in their breasts, and possibly also amazement and indignation that such things should be. But other people besides clergymen were poor. There were poor solicitors in the country—[*cries of* "No," *and laughter*)—and poor doctors, and poor Nonconformist ministers, and all these people doubtless held that they had equally good claims to exceptional treatment. By asking that the claims of the clergy to relief should be given priority over the claims of other classes, the Church party would depart from the strong position which they at present occupied in connection with this matter. Their opponents would be able to say that in that House the clergy were treated on a different footing from other taxpayers. [*Ministerial cries of* "No!"] It would be a bad thing for the Church of England if the idea should get abroad that that House was ready to remove burdens from the shoulders of the clergy in order to transfer them to the shoulders of their parishioners, many of whom might not even belong to the Church of England.

Mr. ARTHUR JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke) suggested that a process of redemption would be a good way of relieving the clergy of the rates and burdens on the tithe rent-charge. The hon. and learned Member who had just sat down had pointed out that if the clergy were relieved their burdens would have to be borne by others. That was, no doubt, true; but if tithe redemption were to take place any extra rates thrown upon parishes would have to be met by the landowners. It was not many years ago that the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced a Bill dealing with this very subject, but it was not proceeded with for want of time. Why could not a Bill for the redemption of tithe be re-introduced now, when money could be borrowed so cheaply? The Royal Commission on agricultural distress had reported unanimously that if this tithe rent-charge could be got rid of, not only would all existing occupiers of land be benefited, but future occupiers also.

***Sir JOHN LENG** (Dundee) wished to say a few words, as one of the representatives of a country which he had not even heard named in the course of discussion. Most speakers had spoken as if England were the whole of the United Kingdom, and as if the clergy of the Church of England constituted the whole of the clergy in this country. He begged to remind hon. Members that there was one important country called Scotland. The hon. Member who had just spoken had pointed to one method of dealing with the question which had been brought before them. He would draw attention to the example which had been set by the Established Church of Scotland. There were many poor livings in that Church and many poor clergymen, but the members of the Church of Scotland did not come to that House with an appeal to have the stipends of the poorer clergy supplemented, but established a Clergy Augmentation Fund. Although the northern division of the Kingdom was by no means as wealthy as the southern, although the members of the Church of Scotland were not, as a rule, as wealthy as the members of the Church of England, and although the Church of Scotland had no highly-paid dignitaries like the bishops of the Church of England, that fund was established, and under it every minister in a parish church in Scotland received an income of £200 a year. If appeals were to be made for exemptions in favour of the Church of

England clergy a very strong case for similar exemptions could be made out on behalf of the clergy of the Church of Scotland. It would not do for the Finance Minister of this country to consider local appeals merely, especially when that Minister was a member of a Unionist Government. In dealing with matters of this kind the Chancellor of the Exchequer must regard the whole of the United Kingdom, and act upon such broad and general principles as were applicable to each division of that Kingdom. He had referred to Scotland as setting an example worthy of imitation, and he would now refer to it by way of warning to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Although the clergy of the Scotch Church had now the benefit of the Augmentation Fund, they enjoyed, under "use and wont," an exemption from the payment of poor rates, and at every election candidates were questioned as to why this special exemption was given exclusively to the clergy of the Established Church and not extended to Nonconformists. If the right hon. Gentleman were to do what he was asked to do for the clergy of the Church of England, ministers of Nonconformist Churches would suffer under another serious grievance. There were many conscientious, devoted, zealous and pious men ministering in the Nonconformist Churches of England, and why should they be excluded from the benefaction which it was desired to bestow on the clergy of the Church of England? He could not believe that the right hon. Gentleman would consent to create another grievance as between the one class and the other. Gentlemen sitting on the Benches opposite were already believed to have been legislating for the classes rather than for the masses. [*Ministerial laughter and* "Hear, hear!"] A day of reckoning was coming for hon. Gentlemen opposite. Every step they took in the direction suggested was a step which would lead them further astray. He hoped they would not have any more of this class legislation. Many on the Opposition side of the House were not strong partisans. [*Ministerial laughter and cries of* "Oh!"] They wished for legislation on fair and equitable principles, and were prepared to support any Government which would legislate in that direction, as they were also prepared to oppose to the utmost of their ability any Government which was addicted to legislation of the character he had described.

*Mr. JEBB (Cambridge University) reminded the hon. Member for West Fife that the clergy did not claim any exceptional treatment. He wished to emphatically contradict that assertion. What was peculiar to the case of the clergy was the nature of their grievance. What they asked was that, suffering under burdens which were "excessive and inequitable," they should receive the same kind of equitable consideration given to any other overtaxed class. Why was their grievance a special one? Because so much of their income was derived from the source of tithe. And the special points in their case were these. They were a professional class who were rated on their professional income; they were taxed on money which they never received; their income from tithes had diminished while their burdens had increased. The tithe was assessed in Queen Elizabeth's time to the poor rate only. Now it was assessed to ever so many rates. Clerical incomes far below the level for exemption from income tax were heavily taxed, and it was an unfortunate thing that recent Measures for the relief of agricultural land, instead of lightening their burdens, tended to increase them. Under the Act of 1896, a good authority said it is probable that the rating of buildings and other hereditaments would have to be increased—[*cheers*]—and in some purely agricultural parishes where there are few buildings a considerable addition to the rate is thus likely to be thrown on the tithe rent-charge. Let the House remember that the heavy burdens on the clergy—crushing burdens as they were on those who held small livings—did not affect the clergy alone, but also the poor to whom the clergy ministered; and hon. Members opposite who talked about class legislation should remember that if they opposed relief of the heavy burdens of the poorer clergy they were inflicting a grievous injury on the poor. The late Lord Selborne, who knew the subject well and the lot of the clergy, and was careful of his words and never exaggerated, said, in his "Defence of the Church" (1886):—

> "The parochial clergy of the Church of England, without legal constraint—and although their endowments are too often insufficient for the decent maintenance of themselves and their families, unless supplemented by private means—are throughout the country the main dispensers of most of the charities of life; ministering generously and liberally, not so much of their abundance as of their poverty, to the temporal as well as spiritual necessities of their poor. Where others can and will help, they bear their full share; and in many places, if the good were not done by them, it would be left to the poor law."

He, therefore, supported the Motion, not only in the interests of the grievously overtaxed poorer clergy, but also in the interests of the poor, to whatever denomination they belonged, throughout the country. [*Cheers.*]

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir MICHAEL HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): The hon. Member for West Fife rather complained that this matter had not been ventilated by a deputation to myself in place of being discussed in this House. I can only say that for myself I do not share that regret. [*Laughter.*] If the Debate is memorable for nothing else, I think we shall not forget the perfectly candid and frank manner in which the hon. Member admitted the formidable nature of the argument that the Church's property belonged to herself. [*Cheers.*] I do not recollect that the hon. Member was quite so strong upon that point in the course of the last Parliament.

MR. BIRRELL: I recognise that the Church's property belongs to the Church and no one else, in the same way as the property of any public charity belongs to that charity and nobody else. But unless the right hon. Gentleman is prepared to say that the Charity Commissioners have no right from time to time to divert from one object to another charitable funds, I am at a loss to see why he need think I am guilty of any inconsistency when I say that Church property, although it belongs to the Church, may very well by the House, on proper considerations, be diverted from its original purposes to others of a more important character. [*Ministerial laughter.*]

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I am content with the admissions that the hon. Member has made, all the more so because I was going to observe on the somewhat discursive nature of the Debate. I do not intend to say a word more on that subject, neither will I follow the hon. Member for Dundee in his assertion of the claims of Scotland, which I think betrayed ignorance of the system of rating tithe rent-charge in England. The hon. Member for Plymouth told us a good deal about Imperial taxation upon the property of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and about the enormous value of the land which is under the control of that body, and generally of the great resources at their command. This Motion does not relate to Imperial taxation; it does not relate to land or tithe rent-charge under the control of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and therefore I fail to see how the hon. Member's observations were appropriate to the occasion. I am glad myself that we have not to discuss the whole subject of tithe rent-charge and rating. I have had something to do in this House with both these subjects. I had the somewhat unpleasant task of passing an Act through this House with regard to tithe rent-charge in 1891, and I am afraid it is 30 years ago since I sat on a Select Committee on the Valuation of Property Bill, which dealt also with the rating of tithe rent-charge; and I can only say that if there be two dry technical subjects in this world I think the two I have named are the driest. United they were simply terrible as a matter of discussion. [*Laughter.*] I am glad, therefore, that what we have to deal with to-day is not the subject as a whole. If it were, I think I could show some reason for the view I hold that tithe rent-charge, not belonging to the incumbent of the parish, has little or nothing to complain of in the matter of rating. It has certain deductions allowed to it in calculating the rateable value from the gross estimated rental. I believe those deductions are fair. I see no reason why they should be increased. I am glad to recognise the fact that my two hon. Friends who Moved and Seconded this Motion admitted in their speeches, as I think has been generally admitted by those who have spoken in favour of the Motion, that the rating of tithe rent-charge could not properly have been dealt with in the Rating Act of last Session, but that it stands on a different footing from land, and must, if dealt with at all, be dealt with in a different way. I confess I have always felt that, although in my belief, and in the belief of the great majority of this House, there was great reason for the relief which was given by the Act of last Session to agricultural land in the matter of rating, yet, tithe rent-charge being the first charge on agricultural and other land—a charge which has to be paid, whatever amount the owner of the land might have to expend in repairs and cultivation of the land out of which the tithe rent-charge has to be paid—is on a totally different footing, and could not claim the kind and amount of relief given last year. The point before us is, whether tithe rent-charge which belongs to the incumbent of the parish is, in regard to rating, on a different footing from other tithe rent-charge. My hon. Friend the Member for Essex, who proposed the Motion, and gave us some most interesting and painful statistics as to the sufferings of the parochial clergy in this matter, suggested that further deductions should be made in such cases in calculating the rateable value of the tithe rent-charge from the gross estimated rental. He suggested that payments to Queen Anne's Bounty and land tax, and payments to curates, and payments which the incumbent was obliged to make to daughter parishes, should be allowed for in calculating the rateable value. With regard to the first of these I am bound to say I think my hon. Friend would find it difficult to draw a distinction between payments to Queen Anne's Bounty for loans borrowed by the incumbent for the improvement of the living or house, and payments by an ordinary owner of land for money borrowed by him from a land improvement company, or some other source, for the improvement of his property. I do not see how you could allow one deduction without allowing the other. Again, with regard to the land tax. How could you allow a deduction to the incumbent for land tax in calculating the rateable value of tithe without also allowing a deduction to the landowner for land tax in calculating the rateable value of the land? Then, again, I come to the further suggestions which the hon. Member made. They were based on what I feel is a strong argument—that the incumbent of the parish being rated on his tithe rent-charge is the only man who is rated on his professional income. [*Cheers.*] He is rated as the occupier of tithe rent-charge. But he occupies that because he has to render certain services, either by himself or by curates whom he has to employ, and if he ceased to render those services he will, of course, under the law very soon cease to occupy tithe rent-charge. That is a matter in which I feel with my hon. Friend that the incumbent of a parish paid by tithe rent-charge is in an entirely different position from any other person assessed to the rates. I, therefore, am bound to say that I feel a very strong sympathy with the suggestion which has been made, that this is a matter which constitutes a grievance and requires a remedy.

[*Cheers.*] But then I come to the point how that remedy is to be applied, and there I have to admit that there is a great force in what has been said on the other side of the House, and admitted on this, that the rating of tithe rent-charge paid to incumbents is, after all, only a part, and not a very large part, of the great question of local taxation. Well, Sir, we dealt with a part of that question last Session, and in dealing with it we were obliged by a general consensus of opinion, not by any means confined to one side of the House, to refer the whole subject to a Royal Commission, which is now sitting and investigating it. How can I, how can Her Majesty's Government, take out from the investigation of this Commission one part of the question of local taxation, and attempt to deal with it by way of relief, while neglecting all the rest? It is perfectly true, as hon. Members on this side have said, that there are other ratepayers who have had, and who have, legitimate cause of complaint. It is perfectly true that in our great towns you may find shopkeepers, or occupiers of the poorer class of houses, who may have great cause of complaint in regard to the amount of the rates. All these matters are now being investigated by the Royal Commission. I would suggest to my hon. Friends, and to those whom they represent here, that, if they have not done so already, they should lose no time in bringing this special matter of the rating of clerical tithe rent-charge under the early notice of that Royal Commission. ["Hear, hear!"] If it should seem well to that Commission to make a Report to Parliament on that or any other subject, then the time would arise when Her Majesty's Government might fairly and properly consider whether they should deal with it, and, if so, how it should be dealt with. For the moment, I can only, on behalf of the Government, express my feeling that there is a grievance in this matter which requires to be remedied, and that it will have to be dealt with as part of the great subject of local taxation, and in that way I hope some fair relief may be given to those whose case has been so eloquently advocated. [*Cheers.*]

The House divided:—Ayes, 178; Noes, 97.—(Division List, No. 143.)

LONDON TAXATION (GRANTS IN AID).

Mr. T. LOUGH (Islington, W.) moved:—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that a Select Committee be appointed to consider whether the amount annually received by London under grants in aid bears a just proportion to the amount contributed by London to the general taxes of the nation."

He said that perhaps the phraseology of the Motion was not perfect in every respect. By "general taxes of the nation" he meant Imperial taxes as well as local taxes. It was very difficult to find any absolute accurate estimate of how much London paid in Imperial taxation. London was kept separate from the rest of the country in the Income Tax Returns, and it would appear from those that London paid about 7-15ths of the whole. It was not perhaps absolutely fair to quote that figure in support of his argument, because a large amount of the Income Tax paid in London was earned elsewhere. But in the case of the inhabited house duty London was assessed for 2-5ths of as much as the whole country was assessed, which showed the large amount contributed to Imperial Taxation by London. In 1888 the present system of grants in aid was instituted. There was the allocation of licences that might be paid in any given localities to the local purposes of those localities, and there was the allocation out of Excise instead of other grants in aid paid previous to 1888. The loss to London in licences was a growing loss. In 1888-89, the first year of the allocation, London got in licences practically

14 per cent. of the whole amount, while five years afterwards London only received 13½ per cent. But the position of London was much worse in regard to the allocation out of Excise instead of other grants. In the first place, the year 1888 was for London the worst year that could have been chosen for the allocation, which had remained since then a more or less permanently fixed grant. If any of the four previous years had been chosen she would have got a larger proportion of the grant. London got only 22½ per cent. of the grant in 1888, whereas if the allocation had occurred in the previous year she would have got 23 per cent., and in the year before 24 per cent. Before the year 1888 London used to receive from Imperial resources a contribution of 4d. in the pound on the rates towards the maintenance of the police within the metropolitan area, and the amount paid in the year 1888 had been given to London ever since. But the rates had since increased, and the Commissioners of Police had demanded from the London County Council 4d. in the pound on the growing rates, although the County Council only received from the Imperial Exchequer the amount fixed in 1888. During the past seven years London received £152,000 less towards the maintenance of the police than she would have got if the arrangement in existence before 1888 had continued. London received only £3,500 for main roads out of a total grant of £500,000, and nothing at all in aid of sanitation, though a grant of £75,000 a year was made for that purpose to other parts of the country. To sum up the whole case, London received in these grants in aid 13 per cent. of her total rate, while the rest of the country received between 19 and 20 per cent. He admitted that there was one difficulty in the way of the Government granting his Motion for a Committee of Inquiry, and that was that there was a Royal Commission sitting which was practically inquiring into every point at issue, and which, according to the President of the Local Government Board, would take evidence in regard to the grievance of London. He doubted, however, whether the reference to the Royal Commission would enable the grievance of London to be fully considered; and he, therefore, appealed to the Government to consider the matter in a sympathetic spirit, because the grievance was one which the people of London of all classes felt very much. ["Hear, hear!"]

*SIR JOHN LUBBOCK (London University) said that he had promised to Second the Resolution, but he understood from his right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board that this subject would be inquired into and reported on by the Royal Commission on Local Taxation which was now sitting. He certainly thought that London was hardly treated in this matter. The question was not, however, so much, as stated in the Amendment, the proportion received and paid by London, but, what was even more important, whether the proportion allocated to London out of the contribution by the Exchequer in aid of rates was fair in relation to that paid to other parts of the kingdom. He made no complaint either of the present Government or late Government. The position arose from unforeseen circumstances, and all that those who represented London asked for was that there should be a careful Inquiry into the facts. He understood his right hon. Friend to say that the Royal Commission would do so, and in that case he supposed the hon. Member for Islington would not press his Resolution. He would not repeat the details given by the hon. Member. The relief afforded to London in the way of grants in aid of local taxation was less than that of any other part of the country. The proportion of the Exchequer contribution to the rateable value was in London 2·3 and in the rest of the country 3·2; the proportion of the Exchequer contribution to the rates levied was in London 12·5 and in the rest of the country 21·5. In other words, London ought to receive in the first case £160,000 more, and in the second £400,000 more. In fact, London was worse off than any county or county borough in receipt of relief from the Imperial Exchequer. Again, London contributed more to Imperial resources. London paid £655,000 inhabited house duty out of a total of £1,460,000. The skilled advisers of the London County Council considered, he believed, that London ought to receive from £300,000 to £400,000 a year more than she actually did at the present time, and this was a very serious matter for the ratepayers of London. At the same time they made no complaint whatever against his right hon. Friend or his predecessors, as they knew that the circumstances had arisen from the complication of the subject, and they recognised that there was no intention whatever to deal unjustly with London. They, however, asked that the matter should be carefully inquired into, and they understood that the Royal Commission would really investigate the whole question. Under these circumstances his hon. Friend would, perhaps, not think it necessary to press the Resolution to a Division. ["Hear, hear!"]

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. HENRY CHAPLIN, Lincolnshire, Sleaford) remarked that the hon. Member who moved the Resolution had very truly stated that the question of whether London received an adequate share of the Imperial grants, as compared with other parts of the country, was one which had been frequently raised and discussed both in and out of Parliament, and the Motion under ordinary circumstances would have been a very proper one for discussion by the House. But, in view of the reply which he had given that day to a question addressed to him, it was clear that a Debate was not called for upon this occasion. He gladly recognised the spirit in which both the Mover and Seconder of the Motion had accepted the reply to which he referred, and in which he stated that the question raised by the hon. Member was undoubtedly within the scope of the Inquiry now being conducted by the Royal Commission. This was also the view of the Chairman of the Commission, and therefore he thought it would be quite uncalled for on his part if he were to enter into any debate upon the question. He merely wished, however, to guard himself from being supposed to adhere to the principle which he understood was laid down by the hon. Member that London ought to receive a share of the Imperial grants in proportion to the amount she paid to the general taxes of the nation. That was a view he was not prepared to support, and, having said that much, he thought he had probably said all that was necessary. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. LOUGH observed that, after the very satisfactory assurance of the right hon. Gentleman, he would withdraw his Motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

PIERS AND HARBOURS.

MR. EDWIN LAWRENCE (Cornwall, Truro) rose to move the following Resolution:—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, in the interests of trade and communication by sea between places on the coast of England and Wales, and with a view to the protection and development of sea fisheries and the safety of the persons engaged in them, it is desirable that a Departmental Committee be appointed to inquire in what way and to what extent the existing provision of piers and harbours on those coasts should be improved."

The hon. Member's opening remarks were interrupted by notice being taken that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members not being present—

The House was Adjourned at Twenty-five Minutes after Seven of the Clock till To-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 24th March 1897.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

Considered in Committee, and Reported without Amendment; to be Read the Third time To-morrow.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEAL BILL.

*MR. E. H. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) moved, "That this Bill be now Read a Second time." He said that he thought that the House would regard it as a very important Measure. He confessed that he should have been glad if, in the circumstances, the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary had been present.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (SIR RICHARD WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): He will be here directly.

*MR. PICKERSGILL said that he was glad to have that intimation from the right hon. and learned Gentleman, because he thought that there was at least one Minister who would regard with peculiar favour the introduction of a Measure for the establishment of a Court of Criminal Appeal, namely, the Home Secretary, seeing that he had to discharge duties of a dual character, involving the responsibilty of exercising the clemency of the Crown, as well as of acting as a sort of Court of Criminal Appeal. These were distinct functions, and he thought that it was calculated to lead to confusion, and to considerable misapprehension when they were exercised by one and the same person. In his view, however, the establishment of a Court of Criminal Appeal ought in no way to interfere with the exercise of the prerogative of mercy. It was not peculiar to our country. The necessity for it was founded in the nature of law and in the conscience of the community. Law would be intolerable unless the community reserved and vested in some person power in suitable cases to remit or mitigate the penalties of law. Indeed, the mere fact that the prerogative had been occasionally abused would form no justification for abolishing it. Some 20 years ago a President in France persistently pardoned those who were guilty of the most diabolical murders, and the Parisians nicknamed him "*le père des assassins,*" but nevertheless, no one in that country dreamed of abolishing the prerogative. Therefore it was that this Bill did not touch the prerogative of mercy that was vested in the Crown, or the manner in which it was exercised in this country. The mischief of our present system was, however, that the Home Secretary had to use the machinery of the prerogative of mercy when he was really exercising the functions of a Court of Appeal. The consequence was, that the conscience of the community was being continually outraged by the Home Secretary professing to pardon those who ought never to have been convicted. Thus in 1895 there were 22 cases, in which men were nominally pardoned on grounds which challenged the propriety of their conviction. When a man ought not to have been convicted, to pretend to pardon him was a scandal to the administration of justice. The Bill, therefore, proposed, by the establishment of a Court of Criminal Appeal, to relieve the Home Secretary from the trouble and responsibility of having to institute secret inquiries in cases where there was reasonable doubt whether the individuals ought to have ever been convicted at all. Another ground upon which he contended that a Court of Criminal Appeal should be established was the great disparity that existed in the sentences that were pronounced upon those who were convicted of various offences. No doubt he should be told that day, as he had often been told before, that the public were misled on the subject by the necessarily short reports of cases which appeared in the newspapers, which did not clearly set forth the differentiating circumstances which justified that disparity. He fully recognised that there was an element of truth in that contention, but when every allowance had been made, the disparity remained a public scandal, and was admitted by the Judges themselves. No one would charge him with having a want of respect for the Judges of the land, but in proposing legislation of this character it was the privilege of hon. Members in that House to speak freely in reference to it, and to point out the defects in the existing system without in any way making a personal attack upon individuals. The personal equation played an exorbitant part at present in the administration of justice. The idiosyncrasy of a particular Judge, with regard to the sentences that he pronounced, displayed itself not so much in the general sentences that he passed, as in regard to some particular class of crime. Take, for instance, the killing of an infant by its mother, in a case where it was only through the merciful construction placed by the jury upon the acts of the person charged, that a verdict of wilful murder was not returned. In such cases there was a most extraordinary disparity in the sentences passed by different Judges. Again, one Judge might be peculiarly hard in cases of coiners or forgers, or where the sexual passions were concerned, while another might have a particular antipathy to servants who embezzled their masters' money. A weakness for Fagin was shown in one Court, and a weakness for Bill Sykes in another. Again, some Judges took a very strong view in cases where there had been previous convictions, and where such was the case sentences of penal servitude followed almost automatically. In another Court care would be taken to inquire into the nature of the first offence, and into the character of the new crime, and the time that had elapsed between the two, together with the relations between them, would be taken into consideration; while in a third Court previous convictions might be practically ignored. Judges were also divided in opinion with regard to the infliction of the punishment of flogging. Some Judges never imposed that punishment, whereas others only resorted to it when brutality had been used, thus (as they said) reserving a brutal punishment for brutal offences; while there was yet a third class of Judges who ordered flogging even in cases where the violence used was merely of a technical character. This disparity in the infliction of punishment was a scandal to the administration of justice. On another point, that which related to the addition of police supervision to other punishments—an addition to which he had the strongest objection, on the ground that it tended to hinder a man who was making an attempt to retrieve his character and to earn an honest living—there was a great difference of opinion between the Superior Judges and the Judges of Quarter Sessions, the former rarely imposing it, while the latter continually imposed it. He need only compare the difference between the sentences pronounced by the late Recorder of Manchester and the Recorder of Liverpool to illustrate the necessity that existed for the establishment of some central Court of Criminal Appeal, where sentences could be revised and brought into something like uniformity. He knew both the learned gentlemen to whom he referred, and was satisfied that they were both excellent lawyers and estimable men, and he had no desire to decide between them; but, although either of them might be in the right, they could not both be so. Mr. Justice Hawkins and Mr. Crackanthorpe had suggested as an alternative to a Court of Appeal, the appointment of a Royal Commission to consider and report on the principles upon which sentences should be based. He should expect, however, that little good would arise from the adoption of such a course, because a Royal Commission would soon find itself involved in a barren controversy in reference to the objects of punishment. On the other hand, a Court of Appeal would have concrete cases to decide, and that would be far more in accordance with English methods and the English character. As the Judges said:—

> "a series of decisions as to sentences by one Court would, by examples and the reasons given for them, tend to secure uniformity."

With regard to the constitution of the Court of Criminal Appeal, the Bill provided that the Judges of the Queen's Bench Division should select from among themselves six Judges who, together with the Lord Chief Justice, would constitute the Court. As far as possible the Court would be constituted for long periods of the same

Judges, in order to better secure uniformity. Then it was provided that the judgment of the Court within its jurisdiction should be final. That provision followed the existing law as far as the Court for Crown Cases Reserved was concerned. No doubt he would be met by this objection, that the jurisdiction of the Court for Crown Cases Reserved was vested in all the Judges of the High Court, although the Court might be constituted, and was usually constituted, of five members only. Still, in cases of doubt or difficulty, all the Judges might be summoned to attend, and that sometimes took place. It was obvious that, numerically regarded, the proposed Court of Criminal Appeal would be weaker than the present Court for Crown Cases Reserved, and it might well be a matter of doubt whether or not the power of appeal from the Court of Criminal Appeal should not be permitted. In the Bill it was proposed that the judgment of the Court should be final, simply because the Judges in their recommendations, which the Bill followed, laid down that, in their opinion, the judgment of the Court should be final. With regard to the jurisdiction which was to be given to this Court as to sentences, it was proposed that any person convicted on indictment might appeal for the revision of his sentence. Probably it would be said that this was opening the door to an overwhelming number of appeals. On consideration he did not think it was open to any very solid objection on that ground, and for the reason that the Bill itself provided an automatic check in this respect, that an appeal having once been made it would be open to the Court to increase the sentence as well as diminish it. Further, the object of the Bill being above all, as far as this part of the Bill was concerned, to secure uniformity of sentence, it was absolutely essential to vest in some public authority the right to initiate an appeal in order to obtain the increase of an absurdly light or insufficient sentence. The supporters of the Bill accepted the logical consequence to which they were driven, and vested that authority where he was sure it was not likely to be abused—in the Attorney General. With regard to convictions he might be told that this Bill did not go as far as it ought to go. Personally he rather sympathised with that objection. But the Bill went as far as Her Majesty's Judges were willing to go. It provided that the Home Secretary, upon complaint made to him, might refer any case of conviction to the Court of Criminal Appeal. In his judgment this would be going a great way to relieve at all events the pressing need which for some years had been experienced. Two notorious cases would have been amply met by this provision of the Bill—that of Mrs. Maybrick and the case of police constable Murray, of Hampstead. No doubt, if a provision of the kind had been part of the law, the Home Secretary of the day would have used it in the case of Mrs. Maybrick. Take again the case of police constable Murray. The position was absurd. The Home Secretary believed he was innocent, but it was absolutely impossible for him to reverse the conviction. All the right hon. Gentleman could do was to give him a free pardon. Was not that insulting to the common sense of the country? Although the country approved of the action of the Home Secretary, and believed he had done substantial justice, still they felt the position was an absurd one in an innocent man being pardoned for a crime he did not commit. Questions of law, speaking generally, were amply met by the statute which established the Court for Crown Cases Reserved; but this was rather an antiquated statute, and there were one or two points in which it was found to be deficient. It had been thought a convenient plan altogether to repeal the Act which set up the Court for Crown Cases Reserved, but its provisions were substantially re-enacted in more modern phraseology with one or two amendments, mainly technical, and transferring its jurisdiction to the Court of Criminal Appeal. He felt that this Bill was likely to be criticised rather more for what it omitted than what it contained. He wished, however, to remove a misapprehension that often arose, not among lawyers but among laymen. It was said there was a greater disparity between the sentences imposed by Justices in Petty Sessions than by the Superior Courts. There might be some truth in that. But it was a sufficient answer as far as his present purpose was concerned, that at the present time, if any Court of summary jurisdiction sentenced a man even to a day's imprisonment there was even now a right to appeal—

not, he admitted, a satisfactory one—the effect of which was to practically shut out poor men from availing themselves of it. But still, under the law as it stood, a right of appeal existed, and it therefore did not properly fall within the purpose of the present Bill. Still, he should be glad if appeals against summary convictions could be brought more within the reach of poor defendants. Personally, he would like to see a large and comprehensive Bill passed. But he would much rather pass a small Bill than no Bill at all, and he might frankly say that in presenting a Bill on so important a question, upon which he knew different opinions were entertained as to the manner in which its objects were to be carried out, he desired to cover himself with the authority of Her Majesty's Judges, and he had found himself bound in honour—having stated in the memorandum that the Bill was to carry out their recommendations, he had endeavoured to adhere strictly to them, and it was to a Bill embodying the recommendations of Her Majesty's Judges that he asked the House to give a Second Reading. When the Bill had passed that stage it would be open to Members of that House to propose Amendments. The question dealt with by the Bill had long been clamouring for settlement. The present was a great opportunity. The Session was still young, and there would be full time for discussing and amending the Bill in Committee. The House, by reading the Bill a Second time, would remove from the Home Secretary of the day, whoever he might be, a most embarrassing part of his duties, and set the country free from the stigma which, as far as he knew, was fastened upon it alone among civilised countries, that whereas a matter of a few pounds in a civil case could be carried from Court to Court and even to the House of Lords itself, there was no Court of Appeal in criminal cases. The necessity for such a Court had long been demonstrated and widely felt, and he trusted the House would meet that necessity and satisfy that feeling by giving a Second Reading to this Bill. [*Cheers.*]

*Sir ALBERT ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said he rose to Second the Motion, and he hoped the Government would at least give it such a measure of support as would induce the House to affirm the principle that there was a need in this country for a Court of Criminal Appeal. The House was fortunate in being represented by the Home Secretary and the learned Attorney General, because the first named had always taken a broad practical view of questions of law reform, and he trusted he would give favourable consideration to what would be a great law reform indeed. The absence of a Court of Criminal Appeal had been a great blot upon our jurisprudence. The want of it was pointed out, long ago, by Jeremy Bentham, and there had been a gradually increasing concensus of opinion that a reform in this direction was needed, not only in the interests of the life, but more frequently of the liberty of the subject. The Judges, with all their experience in the administration of the law, recommended this reform. Lord Esher, the Master of the Rolls, had spoken very strongly in its favour. No one could fail to be struck with the anomaly that marked our law. While cases involving a small sum of money or a civil injury might be taken, by a succession of appeals, to the House of Lords itself, yet in a matter that involved character, liberty, or life, the verdict of the jury was practically conclusive. As to the objection that there would be a multiplicity of appeals, if multiplicity was necessary in order to effect justice that was an answer to the objection. But, inasmuch as this Bill was a two-edged weapon, giving the right to increase as well as to decrease or annul a sentence, the very general use of it that had been anticipated would not, he thought, be made. On the other hand, the right of appeal, though it might not be used, would be a very great security for justice being done in the Court of First Instance. It was a notorious fact that there had been grave miscarriages of justice in criminal proceedings, even in capital cases. Happily, they seldom occurred, but still they did occur, and the life of a perfectly innocent man might be taken. The late Mr. Justice Stephen had estimated the number of such cases at one per 1,000, and had said that the percentage was so small as scarcely to justify a claim for the amendment of the law. He thought, however, that no effort ought to be spared in a humane code of law to reduce the probability of such cases occurring to the lowest possible term, as even one case in 1,000 carried with it the most serious consequences to the individual. He was even surprised that no steps had been taken to establish some fund for proper compensation in such cases at the expense of the nation. It had been objected that this Bill would lead to considerable delay, but that objection was recognised in the Bill, which provided for the rapid hearing of such cases. He did not think objection should be taken to delays which arose when there was a reasonable chance of injustice having been done. A tribute was due to the present Home Secretary and past Home Secretaries for the most painstaking care which they had given to cases in which application was made for remission of sentence or pardon. It was in the public interest that no guilty man should escape, but it was also necessary that no reflection should be thrown upon the law in consequence of a wrong conviction. The law required a wholesome publicity in the case of our legal tribunals, an oath was administered, and there was the right of cross-examination; yet in the tribunal of last resort none of these safeguards existed. The proceedings before the Home Secretary were secret, and he ventured to say this secret tribunal carried with it a grave disadvantage in connection with the administration of justice. He would instance the recent case of the release of certain dynamitard prisoners. Even in that House, and very widely throughout the country, a wrong supposition existed as to the motives of the action of the Home Secretary. That misapprehension was completely reversed, and nothing could be more conclusive than the vindication both of the motives and action of the right hon. Gentleman—["hear, hear!"]—but the existence of the misapprehension was a result of the secret administration of those matters. The same thing might occur in connection with the mitigation of other sentences, or the refusal to reverse them. He ventured to say that to vest that jurisdiction in any one individual was eminently undesirable. The individual might have personal predilections which were opposed to capital punishment, and might remit a sentence, not because of a desire to attain justice under the law as it was, but under the law as he thought it ought to be. The prerogative of pardon did not fulfil its purpose at all; the very idea of pardon connoted guilt, whereas the reason for the reversal of sentence in these cases was because a man was believed to be not guilty. Such a man ought not to go out into the world with a taint which carried ruin with it during the remainder of his life. What was needed was a rehearing, in which the man might be vindicated and his character established. He did not think he could cite any case more indicative of the inadequacy and injustice of the present system than that of Smethurst, which was commented upon by Mr. Justice Stephen. The great interest of this case was its bearing on the question of new trials in criminal cases. The jury convicted Smethurst on the evidence as it stood, and if the sentence had remained unaltered there would undoubtedly have been an injustice. After the trial the Secretary of State asked a very eminent surgeon what he thought of the whole case, and received from him the opinion that, although the facts were full of suspicion against Smethurst, there was not absolute and complete evidence of his guilt, and then advised the Crown to give a free pardon. It was difficult to imagine, said Mr. Justice Stephen, in commenting upon the case, anything less satisfactory than this course of procedure, which put the parties concerned in a false position. Then there were instances of the variation of sentences of the most extraordinary character. There was the case of one Recorder who minimised sentences to the lowest possible point; there were Judges popularly known as "Hanging Judges," who took the directly opposite view; and one of the great advantages of the Bill was that it would create a Court which would indicate the principles upon which sentences should be imposed. The Bill, it was true, might go further. He admitted that it was illogical to refer minor matters and only sentences to the Court for revision and to except the death penalty. But the Bill was only a tentative Measure, and if it worked well it would, no doubt, be extended in its operation. Some relics of barbarism still existed in English law, among them that the prisoner who knew most could say least in his own defence, and as a consequence of giving evidence subject himself to cross-examination; and also that a person wrongly convicted could only appeal to a secret tribunal which, even though it set him at liberty, sent him forth to the world with the brand of the criminal still upon him. The object of the Bill was to remove those relics of barbarism from English law, and he therefore trusted it would receive the support of the House.

*MR. THOMAS BUCKNILL (Surrey, Epsom) said he would not have ventured to take part in the Debate only that he had some experience of criminal law, both as a barrister and as the Recorder of a populous city. The Mover of the Bill had said it was intended to carry out the suggestions in the Report of the Council of Judges; but though it was not to be supposed that he took an antagonistic view altogether of the Bill, he should point out that it went much further than the hon. Gentleman had indicated. The Report said:—

> "After full consideration, the institution of a Court is recommended having full jurisdiction to review and alter sentences and a limited jurisdiction to assist the Home Secretary in reconsidering sentences or convictions at his request."

With regard to the revision of sentences, it was to be regretted that there was no rule by which Magistrates, Recorders, or even Judges in the Superior Courts were directed or instructed as to what sentences should be passed; and no one could follow the proceedings of the Criminal Court without noticing that, owing sometimes perhaps to heat or temper or prejudice, to which everyone was occasionally subjected, sentences were passed which appeared to be very unjust. ["Hear, hear!"] But there was considerable doubt as to whether a Court of Appeal was the proper machinery to secure that the injustice done in those cases should be remedied. ["Hear, hear!"] The hon. Gentleman who moved the Second Reading of the Bill spoke about "the personal view" being the main cause of the passing of such sentences. But "the personal view" was inevitable. It must influence Magistrates, Recorders, and the Judges of the Superior Courts; and they could not escape from it even in the proposed Court of Appeal of five Judges. ["Hear, hear!"] In regard to the second recommendation of the Council of Judges, that assistance should be given to the Home Secretary upon his own initiative, he would point out that Clause 3 of the Bill, instead of lightening the labours of the Home Secretary, as the Judges desired, would largely increase them. At present the Home Secretary, by reviewing the evidence taken at the trial and considering circumstances that might have subsequently come to light, did his best to see that justice was done in every case in regard to which an appeal was made to him. But under the Bill he would have to do more than that. Clause 2 provided that the Home Secretary should first go through the whole thing himself, and then lay before the Court of Criminal Appeal such evidence as he considered proper. Therefore the Home Secretary's troubles and responsibilities would be increased by the Bill. Again, Clause 2 directed that the Court, having considered such evidence as the Home Secretary might direct to be laid before them, might set aside and reverse the conviction, diminish the sentence, "or make such other order as justice seems to them to require." The power intended to be given to the Court of Appeal by the Council of Judges was very much less than that. They recommended that the Court should have "power to quash the conviction or diminish the sentences respectively." The words of the Bill, "or make such other order as justice seems to them to require," would include the right of the Court of Criminal Appeal to order a new trial; but Resolution 100 of the Council of Judges said, "The Court shall not in any case have power to direct a new trial." He was convinced that there was no such great evil in connection with the conviction of innocent persons as called for this Bill, excepting its provision for the revision of sentences. He should be sorry to see the law in this country assimilated to that on the Continent. He could well understand that an appeal was needed there; but here we began by assuming a man innocent until he was proved to be guilty. No man could be interrogated as to his guilt or innocence; and every judge—whether of the High Court or of Petty Sessions—took the keenest interest in seeing that the prisoner had fair play. He believed that the number of innocent persons who had been found guilty was exceedingly small; and if this Bill was merely to carry out the resolutions of the Judges, he thought he had shown that it went much beyond that. He should not go so far as to vote against the Second Reading, but he was sure that the evil did not exist to the extent which had been stated. He thought the Bill might stop at dealing with those points suggested by the Judges in their report—the revision of sentences and the lightening of the Home Secretary's responsibilities.

Mr. W. AMBROSE (Middlesex, Harrow) said that he approached this Bill with considerable hesitation, and he sympathised with the object of the hon. Member who introduced it. He was quite disposed to give every attention to any recommendation of Her Majesty's Judges; but while it was the business of the Judges to declare what the law was now, it was the duty of Parliament to say what the law should be in the future. This Bill would be likely to recommend itself to people before it was examined in detail. Sight seemed to have been lost of the fact that the decisions from which the Bill would give an appeal were not founded on first hearings. In the case of an indictable offence, the prisoner was first brought before the magistrates, who would not even send the case for trial unless they were convinced that there was evidence on which a jury would convict. Then the case went to the Assizes or the Central Criminal Court; but before it went to the Judge and jury it was submitted to the Grand Jury, who stood between the prisoner and an unnecessary trial. Then, in the trial, the jury approached the question with fresh minds, and the Judge—who belonged to the High Court—was capable of dealing with any legal points which arose. Difficult legal points were not numerous in criminal cases, and if the Judge were at first unfamiliar with them, he soon learnt all about it with the assistance of a competent Bar. The Bill simply proposed to prolong the prisoner's ordeal; and on what grounds? The first reason urged by the Mover of the Bill was the great disparity of sentences. He would admit that there was a great disparity of sentences, but there was also a great disparity of circumstances, and the Judge had to consider every circumstance in pronouncing sentence. Of course, one Judge might be lenient, and another severe; but that was a necessary incident to human justice. And was it improved by giving an appeal? If absolute uniformity were attempted, it would mean that merciful sentences would often be made more severe. If an appeal were given, in how many cases would it not be resorted to? If a prisoner was sentenced to death, or to a long sentence of imprisonment or penal servitude, it would become a penalty on the relations of the prisoner, because they would be urged to strain every effort and to spare no sacrifice with the view of giving another chance to husband, father, wife, son, brother or sister. What would be thought of a father who did not spend his last sixpence in the effort to procure an appeal for the purpose of getting the sentence or conviction of his child reversed? But the great objection, after all, was that juries would be influenced by the consideration that their verdict would not be final. ["Hear, hear!"] At present there was a great sense of responsibility upon them, knowing, as they did, that the verdict they might give was irrevocable. If Judges found that sentences could be reversed or reviewed by the Court of Appeal, they would soon come to think it was not material what sentence they passed. So with juries. It did not seem to him, notwithstanding the resolutions of the Judges, that the question was ripe for a Bill of this description, and under these circumstances, unless he heard something more than he had heard hitherto, he was afraid he should feel it his duty to vote against the Bill.

Sir ROBERT REID (Dumfries Burghs) hoped that not many Members would accompany the hon. Member into the Lobby in opposition to this Bill. Whatever views there might be in regard to the details—and he admitted that the Bill was capable of amendment and improvement—he thought it would be a great misfortune if the House of Commons were to decline to extend the power of appeal in criminal cases. The condition of things existing in this country was almost unique among civilised nations. No doubt we ought not to regard the procedure of foreign countries as having binding authority upon ourselves, but he did not know that it was the part of wisdom or patriotism to decline to follow a good example which worked well in foreign countries. Not merely that, but he believed cases of real injustice occurred under the present system, notwithstanding the infinite care taken by almost all Judges in criminal cases. He hoped the

Bill would be followed by other Bills in regard to the criminal law; for he could not imagine the time of Parliament better occupied than in amending the irregularities and inequalities in the criminal law. Ample opportunities were given for appeal in civil actions, so jealous were our laws in regard to questions of property; but what was the case in regard to questions of character, of liberty, or even of life? A man was tried for his life and was sentenced to death. He was tried, to begin with, by a common jury. He did not wish to convey that a special jury would necessarily be a superior tribunal, but he thought that, especially in cases of embezzlement, it was an advantage to an innocent person, but against whom appearances were strong, that he should have the advantage of being tried by a special jury. That could be done in a few instances by removal of the venue to the Court of Queen's Bench, but, unless the Attorney General himself moved, it was not easy to get this done. Everyone who had seen cases tried in Court must know that juries may come, and often do come, to erroneous conclusions, and must have seen their findings set aside as unsatisfactory by Courts of Appeal. Yet no one would dispute that the Judge had been honest, and the jury honestly endeavoured to do their duty. And when the hon. and learned Member for Harrow spoke of a Court of Appeal in Criminal Cases having the effect of relaxing the sense of responsibility of a Judge without intending it, he was guilty of a libel on the Judges. It was incredible that any man trying a prisoner for any criminal offence would cease to do his duty because of the knowledge that he had the Court of Appeal behind him. Again, look at the consequences of a verdict. In the case of a civil action the consequences were expressed in damages; in a criminal trial they were expressed in punishment, either of death or imprisonment, and yet there was no opportunity allowed for reviewing the verdict. Such a law was not a humane law, and was not what the law ought to be in a civilised country. Why was it that they managed to get on comparatively well? In the first place, the sufferings were endured in secret in many cases. There were persons best qualified to form opinions about criminal trials who would say that there were many cases from year to year in which innocent persons were convicted; and anyone who read the newspapers, who had in him a spark of humanity or intelligence, noticed sometimes ferocious and cruel sentences inflicted for crimes which indeed merited punishment, which merited more than a reprimand sometimes, yet by the severe Rhadamanthine view of justice were punished most severely. Those who were least experienced in the administration of the law were most severe in their punishments, and those who were least experienced in human nature were most severe in their punishments. When he used to go on circuit, and was fresh called to the Bar, he remembered how one used to hear the criminal say that he hoped to be tried before a "red" Judge—that was to say, one of Her Majesty's Judges, because as a rule their punishments were less severe than those received by them at Quarter Sessions. He recollected one occasion, not long ago, he went into an Assize Court. He was present while Sir Henry Hawkins passed sentence on a prisoner. Mr. Justice Hawkins was one of the most distinguished and one of the most humane and merciful Judges. A man was brought forward against whom it was proved that he had been twice convicted for felony, and on each occasion he had served periods of penal servitude inflicted by Quarter Sessions—five years in each case. Mr. Justice Hawkins read out in Court, at Reading, the crimes for which this poor fellow had endured sentences equal to ten years' penal servitude. They were for stealing something worth 1s. 6d. in one case and 1s. 5d. in another. Mr. Justice Hawkins passed a sentence of two or three months' imprisonment for the third offence, and he thought the Judge said that in his opinion this man had already suffered sufficiently. What they had to consider, therefore, was whether or not there was to be any opportunity given for the purpose of re-trying, as they could in civil cases, the question of guilt or innocence before a Court of Appeal; and, further, whether in a case of sentence of great severity they were not to have some means of appealing to the judgment of more than one man —[*cheers*]—to the judgment of a Court composed of the most upright and experienced Judges, who by conferring together would, he had no doubt, come very often to the conclusion that they might mitigate the severity consistent with justice. The next consideration was as to the character of the Amendment in the law proposed by the Bill. The hon. Member who moved it seemed to dwell on the point that this was a Bill emanating from the Judges of the High Court. He was, of course, prepared to treat with respect any recommendations coming from so high a quarter, but he did not intend to guide himself in the Vote he should give by the fact whether or not the Bill corresponded with the recommendations made by the Judges. The House should consider them, but they should also consider their own experience and duty, and he did not think they should confine themselves within the limits which the Judges recommended. The Bill, following broadly on the recommendations of the Judges, proposed in regard to convictions which were impugned as being wrong that it was only by the action of the Home Secretary of the day that there should be any rehearing of the question. He protested against the limitation. Why was the fiat of the Home Secretary to be obtained before a man could be permitted to take the sense of the Court of Appeal as to his guilt or innocence when it was not expected or required if he merely wished to try the question as to whether his sentence had been excessive or not? ["Hear, hear!"] The Bill was capable of amendment in Committee, and he hoped it would be amended. It seemed to him to go against the constitutional doctrine that a man convicted by a Criminal Court should have between him and the Court of Appeal the discretion of one of the Members of the Government of the day. He believed that this would be a very unwise limitation. If the limitation were removed it would leave an unqualified appeal in all cases of criminal conviction to the Court of Criminal Appeal. For his own part he was not at all afraid of that. He believed it was a mistake to suppose that there would be any large number of appeals. The County Courts, speaking broadly, had not in ordinary cases jurisdiction, except by consent above the sum of £50, and every action for £55 had to be brought into a superior Court and be tried by one of the Judges. In Scotland the Judges, who received half the salary of a County Court Judge, had unlimited jurisdiction in all personal cases, and jurisdiction up to £3,000 in real cases. If we wished to unburden the Judges we should encourage them to do the criminal work and deprive them of the duty of trying a large number of small and trumpery cases. The most important part of the duty of the Judges of the High Court was the criminal part. They should always be showing an example which would be readily followed by other criminal Judges of less *status*, so that the criminal laws of the country should be merciful and humane laws, although at the same time administered with a certain amount of rigour in exceptional cases. He did not believe, therefore, that the time of the Judges would be unduly occupied. It was not necessary, moreover, to introduce an artificial limit, such as the Bill proposed, to the effect that the Court of Criminal Appeal should have power to increase sentences. That was repugnant to the entire spirit of the criminal law administered in this country during centuries; the spirit of the criminal law had always inclined towards mercy rather than towards severity. On no consideration ought there to be any power given to a superior Court to increase the sentence. Let the Courts diminish sentences as much as they pleased; but to increase them was revolting to every one accustomed to the temper of our Courts of Justice. As to the other part of the Bill, allowing an absolute appeal in cases of sentences, he agreed with it. He thought it would be very desirable to allow an absolute appeal in the case of all sentences, if only for the purpose of obtaining uniformity. ["Hear, hear!"] He thought, himself, the tendency with regard to sentences had been to make them much milder, and he was bound to say that one danger in that excellent tendency was that some Judges might be disposed to go too far and discredit the system of leniency which was now coming into force. At all events, he was sure that there were exceptions, and it was, to his mind, most desirable that there should be a power of appeal with regard to exceptional cases. If the matter went to a Division, he should give his hearty support to the

Second Reading of the Bill. He agreed with the principle of it, though he thought it required amendment and also enlargement. ["Hear, hear!"] He believed, if the Bill were boldly tried, it would turn out to be a success. He hoped the Government would give it their support, and if they did they would deserve the gratitude of the country for aiding in a very substantial piece of work in the amendment of the laws. ["Hear, hear!"]

On the return of Mr. SPEAKER, after the usual interval,

MR. ROBERT ASCROFT (Oldham) said there was a general feeling that the time had come when criminal offences should be dealt with, in the matter of appeal, in a manner exactly similar to civil questions. It was a crying scandal that at the present moment the liberty of the subject should be held at such a cheap rate that in case of any miscarriage of justice there was no Court to which a person could go by way of appeal, while in pecuniary matters every Court stood wide open for the purposes of appeal. The hon. Member for Harrow wished the House to believe that the position of prisoners was already safeguarded in two ways—first of all by trial before Justices, and secondly by trial before the Grand Jury. His experience was to the contrary. The trial before the Justices was nothing more than an inquiry. As soon as the Justices were satisfied that there was sufficient *prima facie* evidence on which a prisoner could be sent for trial, he was at once charged and committed. When the case went before Quarter Sessions or the Assizes, all the Grand Jury had to decide was whether or not there was sufficient evidence on which to put the man on his trial. He did not care how wide the Bill was made. His own desire was that all the sentences should be reviewed where there was any possibility of that being done. Unfortunately, where prosecutions were got up by the police—who, he believed, desired in the main to do what was right and fair—he had known of numerous cases where evidence which possibly threw doubt on the guilt of a particular prisoner had not been produced at the trial. He should like to see the Bill extended so that all depositions taken by a police-constable in the preparation of a case should be placed before the Judge before whom the prisoner was to be tried. At present he was not aware that there was any authority to compel the police to produce that evidence. Above all things they must have it thoroughly and clearly understood that in cases where sentence of death was passed the prisoner should have the right of appeal at once. That was not, in his opinion, clearly provided for in the Bill as at present drawn. The Bill, he considered, was rather loosely drawn, but if it went to the Standing Committee on Law they would no doubt be able to make such alterations in it as would carry out the intentions of the hon. Members who had introduced it. The third Section of the Bill, for instance, was undoubtedly too wide. It did not say who the complaint was to be made by. It did not confine the complaint to parties who were interested or affected. He should suggest that it would be necessary that that complaint should be limited either to the prisoner or to some one who was affected by the judgment. He entirely agreed with the late Attorney General that it would be unwise to allow the Judges of the Court of Appeal to have the power of increasing sentences. He thought that would be repugnant to the feelings of all Englishmen, and altogether unnecessary to the carrying out of the objects they desired to secure. He could not thoroughly understand from the Bill whether in the case of a death sentence the prisoner had the full and free right of appeal. Above all things, they must have it thoroughly and clearly understood that a man so sentenced had a full and clear right of appealing at once. Then again, in Section 9, they limited the time within which an appeal was to be made, while in Section 11 they allowed any convicted defendant who was in prison to make an appeal, and no time was fixed. Was it intended that a prisoner, after serving twelve months or two or three years, should have the right of appeal, or did they intend that he should be bound by Section 9? He regarded as very unreasonable the sub-clause of Section 9, which provided that the depositions of all the witnesses and the notes taken by the Judge should be placed before the Court. His experience had been that Judges as a rule were exceedingly bad writers, and he should suggest that a certified copy of the notes of the Judges would be far more satisfactory. He thought that in the case of a death trial the Judge should have power to order that the accused be properly defended, the costs and fees of counsel being paid in the same way as those of the prosecution. He was also of opinion that where a person had been improperly convicted and the conviction was quashed, the whole of his expenses in defending himself should be paid, either out of the Consolidated Fund or from some other source. He had every respect for the Judges, but did not think the House ought to be confined entirely to their recommendations. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that the Bill would be passed, and that they would thus be able to make an alteration of the law which would be satisfactory to their constituents. Personally he was aware of injustice having been inflicted upon prisoners, injustice which would assuredly have been removed had there existed a Court of Criminal Appeal.

MR. LLOYD WHARTON (York, W.R., Ripon) said that, although this subject was deep-seated in the hearts of those who had to deal with the administration of the criminal law, it was one of great difficulty. The Bill did not deal with convictions but with sentences, and he thought that, if machinery could be invented by which sentences could be reviewed, it was only just and right that such machinery should be put in motion. At the same time, there were some difficulties in connection with the organisation of that machinery, because if they gave every prisoner who was convicted the right of appeal, and even if only one-third of the prisoners availed themselves of the right, they would throw upon the Court of Criminal Appeal an amount of duty that could hardly be realised. He estimated that in the course of one week the learned Judges sitting at Assize tried 300 prisoners. Suppose 100 out of the 300 prisoners appealed against their sentences. Could hon. Members conceal from themselves the amount of work that would thus be thrown on the Court of Criminal Appeal? The first clause provided that the defendant—and that he took to mean any defendant who was convicted on indictment before a Court of Trial—that he took to mean a court of record—should have the right of appeal. It was, perhaps, rather a question for discussion in Committee than on the Second Reading whether in any, and, if so, in what way they could limit the right of appeal. He saw the greater difficulty in limiting the right of appeal to anybody, because, manifestly, the poorest prisoner ought to have the same right as the richest. In civil cases the right of appeal was really limited by the extent of a person's ability to pay the costs of appeal. In this case there was no question of payment at all; there could be no restriction, but the right of appeal must be given to all alike. An hon. and learned Gentleman had suggested that there might be a limitation by the length of the imprisonment inflicted. There, again, he saw a difficulty, because if a man was illegally sentenced to three months' imprisonment, he did not see why he should not have the same right of appeal as the man who was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude. There were many other matters of detail which would require serious consideration in Committee. There was, for instance, an important point raised by the third clause. There was provision there to diminish the present power possessed by the Home Secretary of reviewing sentences inflicted by Courts. Only the other day a learned Judge, whose opinion it would be admitted, were he in a position to mention his name, carried great weight, said to him:—"Whatever you do in the House of Commons do not interfere with the present power possessed by the Home Secretary; it is a most valuable power, exercised in a way that no Court of Appeal could exercise it." Power was also to be given to the Court of Appeal to confirm, increase, or diminish a sentence. One's feeling certainly inclined one to reject the power of increasing a sentence. [MR. DILLON: "Hear, hear!"] It was a dangerous power to give—[MR. DILLON: "Horrible!"]—one which was repugnant to human nature. A good deal had been said with regard to the variety of the sentences inflicted. For 26 years he had administered justice in a county which had now a much better repute than it had formerly, and he was sorry to say that altogether he had to deal with about 5,000 criminal cases.

*MR. A. K. LOYD (Berks, Abingdon) said he entirely agreed with his hon. Friend who had just sat down, that the present Bill must be regarded as a Bill for the revision of sentences and not of convictions; that observation having applied to that part of the Bill which gave a general right of appeal. ["Hear, hear!"] So far as related to the jurisdiction to be exercisable at the instance of the Home Secretary or the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the words in Clause 3 gave power to deal with the conviction itself. His hon. and learned Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir Robert Reid), declined to be bound down to the recommendations of the Judges' Report. The hon. Member's view being in favour of a Court for the revision of convictions, and that view being largely based upon the alleged frequency of wrong convictions, he was quite right from his point of view in claiming to go outside the Judges' recommendations, because, though the language of the Judges' Report was large enough to comprise an appeal generally, yet the reasons given were confined to the inequality of sentences and the importance of producing uniformity of sentences.

SIR ROBERT REID said he could assure his hon. and learned Friend that he never said the Judges had rested their recommendations on the existence of wrong convictions; he merely said his own opinion of their frequency was based upon very careful inquiry from good authorities.

*MR. LOYD said he thought the hon. Member and himself were not really at difference. He was saying the hon. and learned Member was right in not relying upon the Judges' Report, because it did not support him in his view as to the frequency of wrong convictions. The Judges said the evil to be remedied was the inequality of sentences, and were not, apparently, of opinion that convictions were wrongly obtained. But there was another reason why the hon. and learned Gentleman and others who had addressed the House might be excused for desiring to discuss the question on wider grounds than those on which the Judges' Report proceeded. This matter had been before the House repeatedly of late years—sometimes in the limited form of a Bill for assisting the Home Secretary in capital cases; sometimes in the wider form of a Bill for a general right of appeal in criminal cases. In 1882 the Death Sentences Appeal Bill was read a First time in February, and after lying dormant the whole Session was withdrawn in August. Then in 1883 a Bill giving somewhat wider powers of appeal was introduced by Sir Henry James, the then Attorney General, and was the first Bill to be referred to the then newly-constituted Standing Committee on Law, presided over by Mr. Sclater Booth, afterwards Lord Basing. That Bill received full discussion, and the Chairman was able to Report it as amended to that House as early in the Session as the end of May. But, unfortunately for that Bill, it was nearly related to the much larger Measure for the codification of the Criminal Law, and being tied in that way to the larger Bill, with which the progress was not so rapid, neither of them came to completion. So matters remained till in 1889 the question of a Court of Criminal Appeal was raised again—so far, at least, as related to the project of giving some relief to the Home Secretary in controverted convictions on capital or serious charges. In that year the Maybrick case was tried at Liverpool Assizes. He desired to avoid alluding to anything controversial in that case, but he thought he might state, without incurring opposition from any quarter of the House, that Mrs. Maybrick was found guilty by the jury of the murder of her husband, by administering arsenic to him, and that verdict, of course, implies that the arsenic was administered with intent to cause his death. But, owing to a controversy raised between the scientific and medical witnesses, a substantial doubt was thrown upon whether the arsenic so administered was really the efficient cause of the death. The unfortunate man had been deluged with physic for some weeks before his death, and it being necessary that the intent should be combined with the actual causing of the result, the doubt so raised led to the sentence being commuted. He thought that the strain to which the Home Secretary was then subjected by such a controversy of fact as that, had a great deal to do with the introduction by Sir Henry James of the Bill of 1890, which was a Bill for a Court of Criminal Appeal in capital cases only. That Bill never got beyond a First Reading, and was reintroduced in 1892, when it met with a similar fate. But in that same year, 1892, the Judges, in making their Report to the Secretary of State, under Section 75 of the Judicature Act, 1873, dealt with the question of an appeal in criminal cases. The consequence was that when, in 1895, a Bill on this subject was introduced the Memorandum prefixed to it described it as being a faithful copy of Sir Henry James's Bill of 1883, as amended by the Standing Committee on Law, with two additions which were directed to giving effect to the Report made by the Judges in 1892. The present Bill, in its turn, was described as being framed for giving effect to that Report. Now, what was the Report of the Judges? It was directed to two objects. First, to the revision of sentences for the purpose of producing uniformity in the proportion of sentences to the offences for which they were imposed. Secondly, to granting to the Home Secretary, in serious criminal cases, access to a tribunal of High Court Judges in those instances of controverted fact upon which he was urged, nominally, to advise the exercise of the prerogative of mercy, but in reality to act as a Court of Appeal upon the facts against the conviction or sentence. Not one word was said, as a reason for the general power of appeal, either in the recommendations themselves at the close of the Report or in the statement of their grounds which appeared at pages 9 and 10 of the Report, as to there being any grievance from wrongful convictions. All they said was:—

> "There is a great diversity in the sentences passed by different Courts in respect of offences of the same kind. It is much to be desired that this diversity should be, if possible, avoided."

Then their Lordships passed on to the second evil to be remedied, viz., the pressure put upon the Home Secretary in capital and other serious cases, which they said threw "at times more responsibility upon the Home Secretary than any one man ought to have imposed upon him." On this second point there seemed, from the speeches up to that point of the discussion, to be no difference of opinion that the Home Secretary should be relieved from the pressure of these grave issues, which were not really appeals to the prerogative of mercy, but were appeals on questions of fact, often of the most complicated kind, and leading to an intolerable strain upon the Home Secretary. Being in accord with the principle of this part of the Measure, he would support its Second Reading. But on the first proposal, viz., that of giving in non-capital cases a general right of appeal to a Court for revising sentences with the sole object of producing greater uniformity, he felt a very great deal of difficulty; while he was desirous of giving due weight to the fact that this proposal had the approval of the Council of Judges. The questions which he should like to hear fully discussed upon this part of the Bill were these. Could uniform sentences be obtained by any legislative proposals whatever? If they could, might they not be just as well obtained without this particular proposal of a Court for reviewing sentences? And, lastly, if it were necessary to create a Court for reviewing sentences, was it necessary to give this general power in all non-capital cases and to all defendants to set the Court in motion? In the first place the Judges seemed somewhat half-hearted upon this first proposal. They said it was much to be desired that this diversity (of sentence) should be, "if possible," avoided; and that a series of decisions by one Court would, by examples, and the reasons given for them, "tend to secure uniformity." And with regard to the power of the Attorney General to move to increase sentences, they said it should be given to him "only to be exercised in rare cases." Before making such an experiment it was most important to see whether uniformity of sentences were possible at all. The main step towards rendering uniformity possible had already been taken in removing during the past thirty years many of the inequalities in the severity of gaol treatment which had survived to our own day. The Prison Acts of 1865, 1877, and 1884, had brought our prison discipline as a whole under the view of the Home Secretary and the Prison Commissioners, aided by their Inspectors. Certainly, without uniformity of treatment in the different prisons a mere nominal uniformity in the sentences would have been illusory. So far, therefore, some progress had been made towards rendering uniformity of sentences possible. But did it not remain, for other reasons, an impossible task still? Were there not reasons in the very nature of the case which must make it impossible even in the future? The sensibility of the person punished to the pain of the punishment was an all-important factor. Bentham had been vouched by the hon. Seconder in support of this Bill. This was one of the considerations which Bentham said we were never to lose sight of. The same nominal amount of punishment was by no means the same real amount to two persons of different degrees of sensibility to the penalty, whether pecuniary, or physical, or mental. Then there was the demeanour of the accused and his or her appearance, and all that it conveyed to the Court of first instance. Moreover, how much depended upon the degree of provocation in offences of violence, or of temptation in attacks upon property, and some other cases. And then there were great differences, among the authorities themselves who were to create the so-called uniformity, upon certain matters, which must first be settled one way or the other. The late Lord Chief Justice Coleridge was of opinion that a small offence, though repeated half-a-dozen times after punishment, remained as small an offence the last time as the first time it was committed, and many others might share that view. Certainly some would hold an opposite view and consider impenitence after correction a ground for cumulative penalty. No doubt the nice distinctions which had justified the action of the Court of first instance might be brought to the knowledge of the Court of review, either on affidavit or by the report of the inferior tribunal, but you would never get these niceties before the public, and there would always remain the impression, after this nice adjustment had taken place, that one man had received nine months or nine years' punishment on precisely the same charge, or, as it would be put, for the same offence, as that for which another had only got three. But assuming the uniformity to be possible, could it not be as well attained without any legislation and without creating a Court to review sentences? Why should not the uniformity be arrived at by consultation between the Judges, and the result be communicated by circular to the magistrates and Recorders, who would gladly welcome and give effect to the principles set out for their guidance by such high authority? And lastly, if legislation on this head was necessary, and a Court for review of non-capital sentences was inevitable, was it necessary to open the door to the general review of sentences at the instance of any defendant who was dissatisfied with the amount of his sentence, as was done in this Bill? The question was, should we continue our present system, by which we allowed a great number of guilty people to escape, in order to make sure of such convictions only being obtained as were beyond the shadow of a doubt? Or should we adopt a system under which, no doubt, more convictions would be obtained, but under which verdicts would be much more lightly given, and the administration of criminal justice be conducted in the litigious way with which we were familiar in civil cases, instead of in the calm, dispassionate, and satisfactory way at present existing? Under our present system every prosecuting junior, from his earliest infancy at the Bar, was taught to conduct his case with a quasi-judicial freedom from all appeal to prejudice. This calm attitude was enforced upon him throughout the case by his companions seated around him, and, if necessary, by reprimand from the Bench. The jury received the facts in this impartial spirit from the prosecution, and were, moreover, directed to give the benefit of every reasonable doubt to the accused, in order that, with the finality of their verdict before their eyes, they should convict in those cases only in which guilt was fully and conclusively brought home. The hon. and learned Member for Dumfries (Sir R. Reid) refused to believe that jurymen or the Judicial or Magisterial Bench would do their work less carefully because there was an appeal from the conviction or sentence. And, no doubt, there would be no conscious relaxation of stringent and laborious care on their part. But, as a matter of human nature, and in reference to anxious and arduous tasks, was it not an axiom that to lessen the resposibility was to lessen the critical care with which the duty was discharged? Supposing the Bill to pass. Rules were to be drawn up not only for regulating the proceedings in the hearing of the appeal, but for the applications in Chambers, which would be open to the contending parties under Clause 7. By the removal of finality and the encouragement of interlocutory skirmishing, so much abused in civil cases, the whole basis of the administration of the criminal law would be changed. He cordially approved, however, of that portion of the Bill which gave power to grant respite of execution on appeal. As to the power of the Appellate Court to increase sentences, he did not approve of the proposal himself; but he thought it fair to mention that, as a check on groundless appeals, it had the sanction of Bentham's authority, who had recommended:—

> "In a penal suit, if, in the opinion of the Judge Appellate, the appeal was groundless, and to such a degree groundless, that, in the mind of the Appellant, it cannot reasonably be supposed to have been otherwise, power to the Judge Appellate to add to any punishment susceptible of gradation, which constitutes the whole or a part of the allotted punishment (burthen of compensation included) any portion not exceeding (one-tenth) or (one-fifth) of the punishment appointed by the Judge immediate."

As the Bill was based on the Report of the Judges, he should vote for the Second Reading, trusting that the important points he had referred to might be considered at a later stage.

MR. BRYNMOR JONES (Swansea Boroughs) said that if he were condemned to death, he should not, in lodging an appeal, attach much importance to the consideration urged by the hon. and learned Member who had just sat down—namely, that he might be exhibiting a litigious spirit. [*Laughter.*]

*MR. LOYD said that the provision he had criticised had no reference to capital sentences, and he had referred not to the acused, for whom every allowance must be made, but to the backers and advisers of the accused, and those who conducted the prosecution .["Hear, hear!"]

MR. BRYNMOR JONES said that he thought, on the whole, that the time had come when some reform should be made with regard to the revision of sentences and the appeal against criminal convictions. There was a tendency in the minds of many to confuse two questions—whether a prisoner, rightly found guilty, had been properly sentenced; and whether the conviction itself were right. Under the present system, where the only appeal was to the Home Secretary, it was difficult to find out the reasons on which the Home Secretary acted. There were grave inconveniences in allowing a large discretion to the Home Secretary; and, on the whole, having regard to the number of our Courts of Criminal Jurisdiction, it would be expedient to provide for the revision of sentences by such a Court as the Bill proposed. He did not think that the proposal would operate to relieve the Home Secretary of a great deal of work; but that was not the object. It would relieve the Home Secretary from a very onerous and difficult responsibility—that of acting on his own discretion, without being able to give the public the reasons which guided his action. Under the Bill, the revision of sentences would be given to a Court of five Judges of the High Court. At first, no doubt, these Judges would have a large number of cases before them; but as time went on, and their decisions and the reasons for them were put on record, and were known to Judges of Assize and to Chairmen of Quarter Sessions, the work of the Appellate Court would diminish. That alone would justify a Second Reading of the Bill. He had practised for many years at Assizes and Quarter Sessions, and he believed the newspapers exaggerated the disparity of sentences. Undoubtedly a difficulty was created by the fact that Judges and Chairmen of Quarter Sessions differed with regard to the first principles on which punishment was awarded, and for that reason the reported decisions of a Court of Appeal would be of the utmost value. Although he was quite willing to admit that, so far as he could judge, it was a very rare occurrence for a prisoner to be wrongly convicted either at Quarter Sessions or the Assizes, he thought it was an anomaly in the law that while in the simplest case in the County Court a new trial might be applied for, there should be no possibility of revising verdicts in cases involving life and liberty. He was quite aware that in the criminal Courts the greatest care was taken to provide against the possiblility of convicting an innocent man, but he was not at all content with a system under which the guilty got off time after time simply to prevent the possibility of an innocent man being unjustly convicted; and he felt that the time must soon come when the House would have to consider whether our criminal procedure could not be amended in that regard. He begged the Government to consider favourably the possibility of allowing the Bill to be read a Second time. ["Hear, hear!"]

*Mr. C. J. DARLING (Deptford) contended that the Bill was not founded on logical principles, and was a far worse Bill than that which was introduced in 1883. From the study that he had been able to give to the Bill, he had come to the conclusion that it was intended to apply to the Dick Dunn case—[*laughter*] and whatever might be its deficiencies and limitations, it undoubtedly would do this—it would enable the Jockey Club, who were now cudgelling their brains to find some method of appeal in the case of Hawke *v.* Dunn to present an appeal.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: It could not be intended to apply to the case of Mr. Dunn, for he has not been convicted on indictment.

*Mr. DARLING, continuing, said that some other bookmaker might be, and the Bill seemed to him to have all the vices of a Bill introduced in favour of a particular class of litigants, and, that being so, it was obvious that it must fail to commend itself to many persons in the House, at all events on his side of the House. But there were more serious objections to the Bill. On what logical ground was a person who had been indicted and convicted of stealing a pair of boots to be allowed to appeal and go before five Judges in order to have his sentence, which might have been five months, increased to six or 12, while a person condemned to death was not to have an appeal? The Bill further interfered with the prerogative of Parliament, for the Home Secretary was invited, when troubled with complaints, not to deal with them himself, but to make a common note and "refer the case to the Court." That would obviously interfere with the responsibility of the Home Secretary in the exercise of the prerogative of the Crown to inquire into sentences and convictions. He was not prepared to say that a Court of Appeal was a bad thing, but he submitted that, if one was established, it should be a real Court of Appeal, and not such a Court as was proposed in the Bill. The Bill also contained a violent attack on the rights of juries, because it provided that the Court of Appeal, though it might not order a new trial or send the case back again to the jury, could simply override the finding of the jury altogether. Such an attack on the rights of juries had not been made since Lord Eldon's time. If ever a Bill required to go to a Committee this Bill did, and he therefore could not vote against its going to a Committee. It had long ago been pointed out by Lord Rochefoucauld that the innocent were very far from receiving the protection everywhere accorded to the guilty. He denied the assertion of the hon. and learned Member for Epsom that this Bill would assimilate our law to that of France, for the Court de Cassation in France could not set aside the verdict of the jury on a question of fact. He had no exaggerated regard for the verdicts of juries, but he did not think there was any real grievance in regard to them. When the hon. and learned Member for Dumfries spoke of the difference of appeals in civil as compared with criminal cases he forgot that, whereas a suitor who imagined that he had a claim against some one could commence an action against him without previous investigation of the matter by any independent person, a criminal charge was investigated before a magistrate, and when a person was sent for trial the grand jury considered as much of the case as they regarded as material before a person was put upon his trial at all. When the case came before the jury for trial, it was with the presumption of the innocence of the accused, which was usually utterly unwarranted by the facts—and a man whose record in the great majority of cases was in the direction of his guilt, was the only person in Court presumed to be innocent. [*Laughter.*] Then, with all this preliminary investigation and that presumption in his favour, counsel for the prosecution was not allowed to do his best against him, while every licence was given to counsel for the defence. Yet it rarely happened that an innocent man was convicted. He once defended a man who proved what seemed to be a remarkable *alibi.* He believed the man to be innocent, and he was acquitted. But the *alibi* turned out to be false, and the prisoner's solicitor subsequently told him, "Your interesting client, Mr. Darling, is now an American citizen." [*Laughter.*]

The lightness of the sentences passed by Mr. Justice Hawkins had been urged as a reason for voting for this Bill. [*Renewed laughter.*] But if sentences were to be increased as well as diminished and uniformity brought about, Mr. Justice Hawkins's sentences would have to be levelled up. So, among other things, the Bill was intended to counteract the humanity of Mr. Justice Hawkins. For these reasons he himself had obviously no alternative if a Division took place but to vote against this Bill. ["Hear, hear!"]

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY, Lancashire, Blackpool): The hon. and learned Member for Deptford has made an amusing speech, but he has not, I think, convinced the House that there are any strong reasons for opposing the Second Reading of the Bill. If I were inclined to criticise the Bill severely, I think I should be justified in asserting that so important a change in the law as undoubtedly this Bill involves is a matter which ought to be dealt with by the Government. Whether the reproduction of the Bill is a step in that direction I do not know and I cannot prophecy. But I do not complain of the hon. and learned Member who introduced this Bill, and for myself and the Government I am prepared to say that we will not oppose the Second Reading. I think it is perfectly plain from the discussion that there is a general consensus of opinion in favour of some alteration of the law, at all events, in the direction of giving some further appeal in criminal cases, whether in regard to sentences or convictions. Certainly as regards sentences, there is a general feeling that that should be done. But I think also the fact that this Bill is based in the main on the recommendations of the Judges is—although we cannot accept it without certain reservations as to the right of Members to express their own views and those of their constituents—is a strong argument in its favour, and it would be an extraordinary thing if the House were to refuse a Second Reading to such a Measure. As far as I have been able to understand this Bill and to compare it with the Report of the Council of Judges, it is substantially a reproduction of their recommendations. I can hardly conceive it possible—although the subject has been discussed by the Judges, in consequence of the pressure, doubtless, of public opinion as well as other reasons—that the House should refuse to consider in principle the recommendations so made. In 1895 a Bill which went rather further in some respects than the present Bill was read a Second time on a Wednesday afternoon without discussion or opposition, and was referred to a Select Committee. I think I may say that the Bill before us has the force of judicial authority behind it, and public opinion is in the direction of something being done to increase the power of appeal in criminal cases, not, however, to the extent given in civil cases. But the Bill is not really a Court of Criminal Appeal Bill at all. It is a Bill which in respect of sentences gives an unrestricted right of appeal to a person convicted on indictment; but, in accordance with the recommendations of the Council of Judges, it goes no further than to recommend that the Secretary of State should have an opportunity, if desired, of referring to the Court of Criminal Appeal some of the cases which at present he has solely on his own authority to dispose of. The Bill does not pretend to enable any person convicted on an indictment to get a new trial. I understand that the universal opinion of the Judges is that there should be no new trial. I do not think anyone recommends that there should be a fresh jury or anything but the reconsideration, by the Judges of the Court of Criminal Appeal, of the facts brought out in the Courts below. While I do not desire on behalf of the Government or on my own behalf to express any opinion on the question whether there should be a Court of Criminal Appeal as properly understood, I think there is great force in the arguments adduced against this Bill from that point of view. I think it is very likely that the sense of responsibility of juries would be very much diminished, and that when the finality of the verdict is liable to be discussed by Judges in a higher Court, verdicts will be given with a lighter heart. However that may be, I think it is evident that it is a case as to which there is a good deal of feeling and sentiment, and as to which it is desirable that the House should undertake some kind of Inquiry.

On the question of inequality of sentences, so far as I have heard this afternoon, there appears to be no dissentient opinion as to the desirability of arriving at some greater equality in our sentences, if possible, by the constitution of a Court which would have power on the appeal of the defendant, or of the Attorney General, to revise the sentences. I think we must all admit that there are instances which have come before us, and of course they have come more particularly before me in the office I have the honour to hold, which are very startling, of the very different and diverse personal views which the different Judges take. Instances were given by the hon. and learned Gentleman who introduced this Bill, in a speech of remarkable clearness and moderation, which I think were brought home to many of us, but though it is proved that we cannot get rid of personal feelings in the matter of delivering sentences, still it would be desirable if you could arrive at some kind of standard or rule which would govern the punishment for the same kind of offence, so far as they can be the same in similar circumstances. Therefore, I believe there will be a general consensus of opinion that if a Court could be constituted something like that proposed and adopted in this Bill, whereby six or seven of Her Majesty's Judges, with the Lord Chief Justice at the head, should be a permanent Court to revise sentences when appealed to, you might do something practical to bring to the minds not only of Chairmen of Quarter Sessions, but also even of Her Majesty's Judges themselves, of whom I have heard some complaints made not unreasonably, that it is desirable to adopt some attempted uniformity in regard to sentences. Much has been made of the words in this clause which give power to this Court to increase sentences. I confess I see great difficulty; it is contrary to the feelings, I am persuaded, of every one who is concerned in the administration of justice that upon an appeal it should be possible to increase the punishment given in the lower Court. ["Hear, hear!"] If you are going to produce an equality of sentences, and if be true that some Judges give sentences which are too small, while others may give sentences which are too large, how can you obtain equality of sentences without levelling up? ["Hear, hear!"] That is a very practical difficulty in connection with this Bill, and this clause of the Bill; still I do feel that it would be in general accordance with the opinion and feeling in this House to say that, so far, at all events, as regards the Court constituted as it is proposed in this Bill for the purpose of remission of sentences, it would seem that Amendments which may be suggested hereafter would be a practicable and reasonable method of attempting to secure that greater equality in sentences which I believe we all desire. With reference to Clause 3, something has been said of the desire to relieve the Secretary of State from the great responsibilities which now fall upon him. I observe that this Bill does not propose to deal with the death sentence; it does not propose in any way, except indirectly, to relieve the Secretary of State from the very arduous responsibility of advising Her Majesty on the exercise of her prerogative of mercy. I should perhaps incidentally say that, although I do not say it is an objection to the Bill, I cannot help feeling that if a sentence has been appealed to a Court of Criminal Appeal, and if that Court of Criminal Appeal, dealing with the sentence in a strictly judicial and legal manner, confirms it, it would be much more difficult for the Secretary of State, if he thinks there are equitable and moral grounds which he is also bound to consider, and has the power of recommending the Crown to exercise the prerogative of mercy. I think that is a consideration which ought not to be overlooked. I think it was the hon. Member for the Epsom Division who spoke as to the way in which this clause is drawn, and referred to the intervention of the Secretary of State in bringing the Court of Appeal to work with regard to convictions. That would really increase the work of the Home Office rather than diminish it. I think there is great force in that objection. It casts, as I understand it, upon the Secretary of State the duty of referring to the Court of Criminal Appeal any complaints which he has received, and which he thinks ought to be dealt with. I do not for a moment mean to say that either I myself personally, or the office with which I am temporarily connected, desire in the least to shirk any of that work or that responsibility, but I do say that it seems to me, looking to the enormous number of complaints which we receive daily, and the manner in which we have to deal with them at present, and will have to deal with them in future, if this Bill passes, that there are very serious difficulties in the way. At present, of course, we require a very strong case put before us in order to take any action; but if the Secretary of State has to refer to a Court of Appeal constituted for the purpose, all complaints made to him which he thinks he is obliged to forward, he cannot refuse to forward almost every case that he receives. I do not think it would be possible for any Secretary of State to refuse to refer to this Court all the complaints which, after a little *primâ facie* evidence, he thought were not frivolous; if he refused I think it would be said that the Secretary of State denied access to a Court of justice; if he freely acceded to all kinds of complaints that are made—and I need hardly tell the House that the Home Office receives a very great many complaints and appeals, some of which are on the face of them, even absurd—I think there would be complaints on the part of the Court of Appeal that the Secretary of State had handed over his business to the Court of Appeal, and no longer exercised that jurisdiction which he attempts, at all events, at the present moment, to exercise. I think those are serious difficulties. As I understand this clause, the Secretary of State is to be the judge of what evidence he may direct to be laid before the Court. What is that evidence to be? Is he to take the evidence of the prisoner's solicitor and a prepared case, or is he to be entitled to lay before the Court those inquiries which he is able to make from the police and from sources generally to the advantage of the prisoner, and the elucidation of facts which could not be brought out at the trial, and which would not be legal evidence in a Court at all? I am afraid that the result of such a procedure would most likely be distinctly against the innocent man whose interests my hon. and learned Friend has at heart, and also would be in favour of the rich man against the poor. ["Hear, hear!"] Supposing this question comes to be argued on the evidence submitted by the Secretary of State before this Court of Criminal Appeal, is the Secretary of State to be represented by counsel? If he is not represented by counsel, how can he justify to the Judges the reasons for some of the evidence which he lays before them? That may sound a technical objection, but I think there is some reality in it. ["Hear, hear!"] I think the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite said something about the reversal by Judges, which I understood him to say was not uncommon, of facts which have been found in several cases in a lower Court. Of course, my observation and experience differ widely from his. I have always understood that there was the greatest possible reluctance on the part of the Judges to reverse any finding upon facts which had been found in a lower Court. [AN HON. MEMBER: "By jury."]

SIR ROBERT REID: That is so in the last few years particularly.

SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: I referred to findings by jury in a lower Court. If this is intended to be a serious Court of Appeal, and six or seven of Her Majesty's Judges, with the Lord Chief Justice at their head, are to go on anything like the same practice they have adopted in the last few years, there is exceedingly little probability that any of those Judges would face with any equanimity the idea of reversing facts found by a jury. Upon questions of law it is probable that all will agree that there are sufficient grounds for revising at present, but nobody suggests that this has regard to questions of law. I do not think you can get your Court of Criminal Appeal, as suggested in this Bill, through a Court of Judges to review facts upon depositions and notes of Judges and so forth. You would be putting upon Her Majesty's Judges a new kind of work, and a kind of work which hitherto they have not been peculiarly willing to undertake. That they would do it I do not doubt. I am glad that this Bill on the face of it, and the speeches that have recommended it, do not propose to interfere in any way with the responsibility of the Secretary of State in recommending the prerogative of mercy. A more difficult, a more responsible, or a more arduous task could hardly be conceived. ["Hear, hear!"] But I believe it is the general feeling of the House and of the country that, whatever Court of Criminal Appeal may be instituted, you must, in the long run, rely in such cases upon the personal investigation, with such assistance as he may get, of the unfortunate person who occupies the position of Home Secretary for the time being. ["Hear, hear!"] The Bill, then, does not cover the most serious and difficult part of the duties of the Secretary of State—namely, his dealing with capital cases—and I question how far it will affect his dealing with minor criminal cases. I am afraid I would horrify the House if I were to tell the number of cases that are dealt with by the Home Office, practically, as a Court of Appeal, and of the number of sentences which are brought to some kind of equality by the exercise of the Royal prerogative. Considering the large number of communications I receive every week from Members of the House in reference to such cases, and the amount of time their consideration occupies, I should be pleased indeed if such an institution as is proposed in this Bill would relieve the Home Secretary of some of his duties. I know there are many experienced lawyers —many as experienced in the criminal law as my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Dumfries—who will regard with great dismay the institution of a Court of Criminal Appeal. ["Hear, hear!"] But matters have come to such a pass, and, having regard to the feeling of Parliament, which has been expressed on previous occasions, and to the fact that to-day, without scarcely a dissentient voice, the House has so far pronounced in favour of the Bill, which, after all, is based on the recommendations of the Judges, than whom no one has a greater right to suggest such legislation, I am persuaded that under these circumstances the Government ought to accept the Second Reading of the Bill. ["Hear, hear!"] At the same time, I think the Bill is full of so many complicated and difficult questions that it could not be satisfactorily dealt with, certainly not by the Grand Committee on Law, and I doubt even by a Committee of this House. ["Hear, hear!"] I think it ought to be dealt with by a Select Committee, for there are many points on which evidence should be heard, and without which evidence the project could make no further advance. Therefore, on the part of the Government, I assent to the Second Reading of the Bill on the understanding that it is to be referred to a Select Committee. ["Hear, hear!"]

*SIR EDWARD CLARKE (Plymouth) said that the House had heard a most interesting and weighty speech from the Home Secretary—["hear, hear!"]—many parts of which called for the consideration of the promoters of the Bill before they could attempt to carry the Measure forward in its present form. He did not complain of the action of the Government in allowing the Bill to be read a Second time, but, in view of future Debates on the subject, he desired now to make clear the very definite ideas which he had entertained for a very long time in regard to the proposal to establish a Court of Criminal Appeal. In 1883 a Bill to establish a Court of Appeal to deal only with death sentences was brought in by the then Attorney General, the present Lord James of Hereford. In the course of the Debate on that Bill he—following a very strong speech by the present Lord Chancellor against the proposal to establish a Court of Criminal Appeal—mentioned the question of the revision of sentences, and said that he thought such revision might very well be dealt with by the establishment of some such Court. He remembered that Mr. Bright, who spoke to him subsequently, expressed himself strongly in favour of that proposal. But he was bound to say that the experience of the 14 years which had passed since 1883 had very much diminished the strength of his opinion in favour of any Court for the revision of sentences. ["Hear, hear!"] He thought the discrepancy between sentences was very often more apparent than real, and if the whole facts of each case and the circumstances with which the Judge who pronounced the sentence had acquainted himself were generally known, it would be found that there were few variations from the rule that the sentence should be fairly apportioned to the offence committed. ["Hear, hear!"] There were, no doubt, some extravagant and heavy sentences, but these exceptional cases, which were usually associated with the names of certain Judges, were dealt with by the Home Secretary; and though it might be possible to have a Court in which those extravagant sentences could be reduced, there were some important points to be considered before any such Court was established. In the first place, was power to be given to the Court to increase sentences as well as to reduce sentences? He believed that public opinion would be against giving the Court the power to increase as well as to diminish sentences. But then, if sentences could not be increased by the Court, an enormous number of appeals would result, because prisoners would have the chance of getting a remission of their sentences without any risk of having them increased. Again, if such a Court was to be of any use at all, recourse to it must be absolutely without any cost to the prisoner, because in the greater number of cases prisoners had no means at all of paying the expenses of an appeal. Therefore, the proposal came to this—that they must provide at the expense of the country the means for prisoners to appeal against sentences, the prisoners having the assurance that their sentences could not be increased and might be reduced. His hon. Friend the Member for Oldham had pointed out that in civil cases litigants had the right to appeal, and he urged that in criminal cases prisoners should in like manner have an appeal against their conviction. The Home Secretary had pointed out that the Bill did not meet that point; but it was, no doubt, the popular idea of a Court of Criminal Appeal, but if such a Court were established, what would the result be? During the Committee stage of the Bill of 1883 to establish a Court of Appeal from death sentences, an Amendment was moved to extend the scope of the Bill to all criminal cases, but the then Attorney General pointed out that in the previous year there had been 12,000 convictions, and assuming there would be appeals in a fourth of the whole, there would therefore be 3,000 appeals to be dealt with, which would take up all the time of the Judges to the exclusion of all other legal business. That might be an overstatement of the case, but the risk of establishing such a Court was really a very serious one. He denied that there was any case for setting up such a tribunal. It was true there were cases in which innocent persons were convicted. He did not think they were many in number. He thought he could count a dozen cases in which he was satisfied that innocent persons had been convicted, but in those cases subsequent proceedings had convinced the Home Secretary that the convictions were irregular, and the prisoners were released. But these cases were, he believed, due to the existence of the rule which prevented either the prisoner or the husband or wife of the prisoner from giving evidence at the trial. ["Hear, hear!"] He hoped, therefore, that the Attorney General would be able to find an early opportunity to proceed with the Bill which dealt with that rule, for he did not remember a single case of improper conviction which would have happened if the prisoner or the husband or wife had been eligible for examination. Before legislating as was now proposed, it would be well to try that other remedy, and he believed that when that remedy had been adopted it would be found that the grievance remaining to be dealt with was so small as to render it entirely unnecessary for that House to legislate for the establishment of a Court of Criminal Appeal. But he not only thought that the establishment of such a Court was unnecessary; it would be dangerous as well. If they were to establish an Appeal Court, to which any convicted person might go to ask for a new trial, they would interfere very much with the prompt execution of justice; an enormous advantage would, of course, be given to the criminal who either had plenty of money, or whose friends were ready to spend money on his behalf, and an immensely increased judicial staff would be required. The change would increase largely the volume and expense of the administration of criminal justice, and, in his opinion, would not really secure better justice. In fact, it would be likely to have the precisely opposite result. It was the present belief of the jury that their verdict was an irrevocable verdict that made them listen so anxiously to the evidence and induced them to accept so willingly and to act upon the caution of the Judge not to decide against a prisoner unless they were quite satisfied with the evidence against him. Once enable jurymen who were standing out for a conviction to say to those who were dissatisfied with the evidence, "You need not trouble; the case will go to the Court of Appeal," and the dissatisfied jurors would give in. Allow that to be the case, and they would take off from juries that stringent pressure of immediate responsibility in the result which operated to produce the satisfactory administration of criminal justice which we enjoyed at present. He made no complaint against the Government for allowing the Bill to be read a Second time, but he confessed he thought that the acceptance of the Measure was rather an example of the Wednesday flabbiness in that House of the afternoon mind. [*Laughter.*] The Government, however, were accepting the Bill only with a view to further examination and investigation. For his part, he entertained the strongest opinion against the establishment of any Court of Criminal Appeal, and he had great doubts whether such a Court, even if limited to the remission of sentences, would not be found mischievous rather than beneficial. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. W. T. HOWELL (Denbigh Boroughs) supported the Motion for the Second Reading. The proposal to establish a Court of Criminal Appeal had a large measure of public support. From time to time, as they all knew, there had occurred criminal cases of a sensational character, and afterwards the public had taken sides for and against the prisoners. The fact that no Court existed for the review of convictions in criminal cases had led to a very scandalous result. He referred to the practice of appealing from the verdicts of juries to the Press. The newspaper reporter in search of copy made capital out of the fact that a very large number of people sided with the criminal who had been found guilty. As long as we had no Criminal Appeal Court this scandal would, he believed, continue. In civil cases Judges were found wrong upon points of law, and juries wrong on points of fact. If, then, in civil cases Judges and juries could go wrong, how could it be said that in criminal cases the possibility of mistakes must be excluded? By the establishment of the Court of Crown Cases Reserved the fallibility of Judges in regard to questions of law in criminal cases had been admitted, and he failed to see how any one could insist on the infallibility of juries upon questions of fact. It must be borne in mind that the Home Secretary could not reverse a verdict of guilty. All he could do was to obtain Her Majesty's pardon for the prisoner, and the grounds and evidence upon which the Home Secretary acted remained unknown to the public. The supporters of the Bill wanted the verdict recorded against an innocent prisoner put on one side, and that a verdict of not guilty should be entered in its place. He agreed that the Bill in its present form might not carry out efficiently the object which its promoters had in view, and that indiscriminate appeals by prisoners ought not to be facilitated. With reference to the argument that juries would cease to fulfil their duties as conscientiously as they did now if a Criminal Appeal Court were set up, he would point out that he had never heard it suggested that juries at *Nisi Prius* did not do their duty because there were Courts of Appeal for civil suitors. He failed, therefore, to see the strength of that argument.

SIR HENRY HOWORTH (Salford, S.) said it seemed to him that the analogy between appeals in criminal and in civil cases failed at every point. In civil cases appeals on questions of fact led to a new trial; but no new trial of any kind was suggested in the Bill. In almost every instance, appeals in civil cases were on questions of law, but no one supposed that the appeals in criminal cases would be on questions of law at all, but simply to find a possible escape from the original sentence. It was not the equation of the judges which was the only cause of disparity of sentences. Those who had had experience as counsel, or as members of a Grand Jury, would know that it was only when they got behind the screen that they could fully realise how the gravity of a crime did not depend upon the actual circumstances. The circumstances of two cases might be almost the same, and yet there ought to be disparity in the punishment. It seemed to him that one of the great difficulties with regard to the equation of the judges was introduced when the reform was insisted upon which involved a large number of judges going circuit to try criminal cases, some of them after having spent the whole of their lives in Chancery Courts, far away from any criminal jurisdiction.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: That was abolished some years ago.

SIR HENRY HOWORTH said that the existence of such a state of things was one of the reasons why an agitation was raised some years ago about the disparity of sentences by different judges. But the supreme difficulty was the question, at whose instance was the appeal to be made? ["Hear, hear!"] It was said that, if the Court of Criminal Appeal was allowed to enlarge as well as diminish sentences, they held, in *terrorem*, over every appellant the possibility of his sentence being increased, and that therefore the number of appeals would be diminished. The cases in which sentences would be increased would be so few, and the idea would be so contrary to the public conscience, that the possibility might be left out of consideration altogether. If the initiative were left to the criminal, there must, necessarily, be an appeal in every case, unless they wished to create a great feeling of injustice and dissatisfaction all over the country. ["Hear, hear!"] How was it possible to provide the Home Office, or any office in London, with the materials on which they were to act so as to do it equitably and fairly to all classes of criminals, unless they gave the initiative to the Judge who tried the case, or, perhaps, if they wanted to create a revolution in the whole practice, to the foreman of the jury? The Bill failed absolutely to deal with this most critical point. He was sorry to hear the Home Secretary's strong objection to this Court of Appeal interfering in any way with his own prerogative of mercy, for he thought there was one part of his work in which that Court could be of essential service to a Home Secretary. What many felt to be a difficulty was, that prisoners who had friends could get easy access to the Home Office by the Press, or through the House or in other ways get their cases brought before the country, while those who were friendless had no such opportunities, and could not exercise the same privilege or have the same remedy; and he believed that a Court of Appeal would be of advantage if it had the power to bring before the Home Secretary the cases of prisoners who had no friends to press their claims. Indeed, that would be the only real advantage, so far as he could see, of such a Court. It would, he believed, be inoperative and futile as a method of correcting the personal equation of the Judges, for the re-trial would be before men who would not have the witnesses—upon whose demeanour under examination so much depended—before them, and who would not have seen the demeanour of the accused himself. ["Hear, hear!"] A Court of Appeal, he could not help feeling, would disturb the great confidence the people now had in the findings of juries and Judges, by diminishing that feeling of responsibility both juries and Judges now felt, which induced them to give a most critical attention to the cases brought before them by the knowledge that a Court existed to re-try their findings. On these grounds he could not support a Bill which left out the only effective remedy, and which would set up a remedy that must be futile and inoperative.

Sir HENRY FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) said there was one aspect of the question the gravity of which had been overlooked by his hon. Friend who had just sat down, and that was the conviction of an innocent man or an excessive sentence upon a guilty man. The argument of the hon. and learned Member for Plymouth cut both ways. In a civil case, whether the cause was trivial or serious, there was the opportunity of revision, and the judgment was, so to speak, not an irrevocable one. It often was a pure matter of pounds, shillings, and pence. It might or might not affect character. But the judgment in a criminal case blasts a man's character for the rest of his life, and affects even his wife and family. He could conceive no stronger case than that which existed for an appeal in criminal cases. He was not enamoured, however, of some of the details of the Bill, and he cordially approved of the decision of the Government to send the Bill to a Select Committee, where it would receive thorough investigation. He differed *in toto* from the hon. Gentleman opposite in reference to the equation of Judges. One of the great grievances in the administration of English law was the discrepancy of sentences. He agreed that when we had a much-needed reform, one desired by every law officer for the last 20 years, and consistently neglected by Conservative and Liberal Governments alike—namely, the reform which would enable the prisoner to tell his own story—the chances of improper conviction would be very much reduced. Reference had been made to the sentences of certain Judges who had from their previous training, or who had not been familiar, perhaps, with the administration of criminal law; but the difficulty was not confined to one class of Judges. Judges were, after all, human; they had their idiosyncrasies and prejudices. He was not speaking of any living Judge; but there had been Judges in this country who had, for example, given an extreme importance to all offences against property. Punishments had been imposed absolutely savage in their severity for these offences. When he was at the Home Office a Judge, now dead, once visited Portland for the first time in his life. He had the candour when he came back to say that if he had had the slightest idea what the punishment of penal servitude was like, he would not have passed many of the sentences he had passed during the course of his long life. The punishments in this country were perhaps the severest which were inflicted in any country in Europe. There was another class of Judges who, very often from religious motives or extreme ethical reasons, dealt with a certain class of offences with extreme severity, and there were other Judges who dealt with them on different lines. One Judge, now dead, told him the story of a trial in the West Riding of Yorkshire and another trial in Staffordshire. At the same Assize, for the same offence, committed in similar circumstances, one Judge was giving two years' imprisonment and the other Judge was giving 20 years' penal servitude in several cases. This was a positive grievance which ran through all our administration. The Judges had no right to stamp the administration of our criminal law with their own idiosyncrasies, and he believed that the establishment of a Court of Criminal Appeal would in time set up a sort of code of punishments not erring on the side of severity. It would be a kind of understood rule in guiding Judges in passing sentences, and it would be a great boon to the whole community. A few years ago a great reform was effected which was believed to be impossible. Judges had a theory that every offence against the Post Office, no matter what the circumstances, must be punished with not less than five years' penal servitude. The public conscience was shocked to find that a postmistress was sentenced to such terms of imprisonment for stealing eighteenpence worth of stamps. The late Mr. Raikes, when the subject was raised

in Committee, said that he did not desire, but deprecated, this severity, because it did not promote the security of the public or benefit the administration of the Post Office; and those sentences had passed away. While he attached importance to a properly-guarded right of appeal against conviction, he attached equal importance to revision of sentences so as to procure something like a uniform principle of administration of the criminal law in order that Judges might feel, if they carried out any special view they might have in dealing with any particular offence, that their sentences would be reviewed by four or five of their colleagues, who might possibly take a different view. He thought that the Government had done wisely in accepting the principle of the Bill and in reserving the question of details. When the Bill had undergone a thorough examination by a competent Select Committee the House might see its way to make a safe, humane, and practical improvement in the administration of the criminal law. [*Cheers.*]

The ATTORNEY GENERAL thought that the hon. Member who Moved the Bill would be satisfied with the discussion that had taken place, even if the Bill proceeded no further. There were serious objections to some of the provisions of the Bill, objections which went perhaps a little further than those matters which could be dealt with by a Committee. He had nothing to add to the weighty speech of the Home Secretary in dealing with the main features of the Bill, but many of the speeches which had been made pointed to a reform which went further than the Bill. He was not certain that it was possible within the limits of any reasonable prophecy to think that reform could be brought about—namely, a Court of Criminal Appeal for all cases. Many other considerations would have to be borne in mind and weighed before they could approach that point. But there was one point to which sufficient attention had not been paid. The late Attorney General had spoken against the suggestion that sentences should be increased, but it was really almost part of the principle of this Bill. The hon. and learned Member for Plymouth had pointed out that if they were going to say to every criminal that he could apply by way of appeal to have his sentence reduced, the temptation to appeal would be almost overwhelming. [*Cheers.*] There was another consideration: Why should not a man try to get a sentence reduced when it could not be increased? Involved in the principle of the Bill also was the fact that this appeal must be at the expense of the nation, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer might have something to say to this branch of the subject, because however worked there must be considerable extra charge on the public revenue in respect of the administration of justice. Otherwise they would be putting a monstrous privilege in the hands of the rich criminal which they denied to the poor criminal. A man charged with an offence who was rich, or who had wealthy friends, would get an appeal, while it would be denied to the poorer man who might have stronger grounds for appealing. Thus the supporters of the Bill had supported a scheme which, if it was to be effective at all, must be carried out in circumstances which would naturally induce all prisoners, or a large majority of them, to try an appeal at a considerable cost to the taxpayer. In all probability the object of the hon. Member had been as much attained by the attention called to the subject, and the sympathy evoked with the general proposals, as by a minute and detailed discussion of the provisions of the Bill. No one felt more strongly than he did the monstrous discrepancies in sentences passed, but he was not at all satisfied that the particular tribunal suggested was the best one to procure the result desired. It was attractive no doubt. It was said that there would be a kind of code of sentences laid down and that the idiosyncrasies of particular Judges would be corrected by his colleagues. But there were other considerations which must not be lost sight of. A newspaper report of a crime and sentence very often gave an unfair representation of what the case was. The demeanour of the prisoner, the circumstances of the crime, and other general considerations which men of the world would bear in mind in fixing a sentence were more effective guides in fixing what the sentence ought to be. Certain rules might be laid down, but he did not believe that any real, effective judgments could be formed except by the moderation of the Judge himself, by his experience, and the circumstances of the particular case. Personally on more than one occasion he had had before him the circumstances of very varying sentences. He had known two or three varying convictions for the same class of offence passed by different Judges, but he had found not infrequently that the circumstances of the cases, when thoroughly understood, were so different that the apparent discrepancy was to a large extent removed. ["Hear, hear!"] He did not say there had not been discrepancies, but he would say he did not himself believe that the suggested Court of four or five Judges would be the best tribunal in these matters. ["Hear, hear!"] In the course of the Debate he thought that scant justice had been paid to the way in which the duties of reviewing sentences was now performed in the Home Office. Sentences—other than those which referred to capital punishment—came up for revision in the ordinary course, and also from the point of view of considering whether or not they had been too severe. On such occasions the Home Office had opportunities of putting itself more in the position of the Judge at the trial by learning from perfectly trustworthy testimony the antecedents of the prisoners, and all the circumstances connected with the crime that, sometimes by accident and sometimes because they were not known at the time, were not brought out at the trial. He was by no means certain that the tribunal of four Judges would be able to use that thoroughly trustworthy information which was at the disposal of the Home Office. Whilst he by no means wished to deprecate any change in the present system which the House or a Committee in its wisdom might recommend, he thought not enough had been made of the way in which from day to day the jurisdiction of the Home Secretary was exercised in connection with minor as distinguished from capital offences. [" Hear, hear!"] The Home Secretary did not of course, care to say much on this point, but the right hon. Gentleman did remind the House that a great portion of the time of the officials of the Home Office was occupied in investigating these cases, in giving redress when it ought to be given, and it was seldom, indeed, that they heard any complaint as to the way in which the functions of the Home Office in the reviewing of sentences were carried out. [*Cheers.*] He must enter his respectful protest against the language of the hon. Member for the Salford Division, who had suggested that the ears of the Home Office was mostly open to the rich and those who had friends. That certainly was not his experience. [*Cheers.*]

Sir H. HOWORTH: I ask the hon. and learned Gentleman to allow me to explain. I did not say anything of the kind; but what I did say was that the criminal who has friends, and the criminal who has power behind him in the shape of friends in this House and in the newspapers is in a position entirely different to the helpless and friendless man in all cases of revision of sentences, and notably in regard to cases which can be brought before the Home Office. That is what I said and what I maintain. [" Hear, hear!"]

The ATTORNEY GENERAL was glad to have elicited this explanation from the hon. Baronet, which he, of course, at once accepted. What he desired to say was that, from what he had seen of the actual work of the Home Office, he was satisfied that in any case in which there was the least ground for supposing there had been a failure of justice, either from the point of view of a wrong conviction or excessive sentence, it was looked into at once, whoever might be the person whose case was brought forward. [" Hear, hear!"] He confessed he thought this Debate had risen above the level of an ordinary Wednesday's Debate. The matter that had been raised was, it seemed to him, one which deserved consideration by Parliament, and he hoped the speeches which had been made might lead the House of Commons to be more willing to entertain proposals and Amendments in the criminal law of the country. [*Cheers.*]

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said the Home Secretary and the Attorney General had proved to demonstration that this was a bad and unworkable Bill, and yet they told them that the Government were going to support it. He thought it was not creditable to the Government, or to the two Members of it who had spoken, that they should have produced such powerful arguments against the Bill, and then announced that they were going to support it. Every kind of learned gentleman had spoken about this Bill—the Judges, counsel, the solicitor, and his London agent—and the only person who had not spoken was the prisoner, for whom he claimed to speak. He supposed it was the only capacity in which he should ever come within the purview of the Bill, and, speaking for the prisoner, he seriously said he would rather be judged by a petty jury of his fellow-men, for any offence whatever, than he would be by any five ermined Judges. This Bill aimed at destroying the British jury system, and it struck at the very root of English law. Why did he say he would rather be tried by a jury? Because he knew that the condition of unanimity being required of the jury, he was certain of getting his case discussed when the jurors retired. They could never gain from one Judge, much less than five, the security and certainty of discussion, and, still more, that sense of responsibility which always appertained to a jury, to whom he would rather commit himself than to any bench of Judges who ever lived. If ever there was a case for criminal appeal it was the strongest in regard to those cases in which sentence of death had been passed; but whereas by the Bill, if a man was sentenced to be whipped or flogged he was to be allowed to appeal, if he was sentenced to be hanged he must go without appeal at all. Could anything show the monstrous absurdity of the Bill more than that? The inequality that appeared in sentences now was rather apparent than real, there being circumstances and evidence before the Judge at the trial which did not come before the public. He asked the House what would be the effect if this Court of Criminal Appeal were invented and if cases were remitted from the Courts below to the Judges for revision? Suppose that out of five Judges three decided one way and two another in a very serious case, would not the public mind be absolutely revolted at the idea that a man was to be whipped or flogged, or undergo some other degrading punishment, by a verdict not of a unanimous jury of his countrymen, but by a majority of Judges? The unanimity required in a jury was an absolute security for discussion, for if one man stood out he required some good reason to be advanced before he gave way. He had, he was proud to say, been a juror himself. When he went into the jury box he was one against 11, but he let his fellow-countrymen understand they would not go back until they had heard all the arguments on his side. They heard them, and the result was, that he convinced his 11 friends, and they went back and gave in the box a unanimous verdict in accordance with the opinion that he alone at first had formed. He mentioned that to show the way in which the necessity for unanimity in a jury made it absolutely necessary that the matter should be discussed.

Mr. PICKERSGILL rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The House divided:—Ayes, 147; Noes, 86.—(Division List, No. 144.)

Question put accordingly, "That the Bill be now Read a Second time."

The House divided:—Ayes, 129; Noes, 85.—(Division List, No. 145.)

Bill Read a Second time.

Mr. PICKERSGILL moved, "That the Bill be committed to a Select Committee."

And, it being after Half-past Five of the Clock, and objection being taken to further proceeding, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed To-morrow.

COUNTY GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

MANHOOD SUFFRAGE (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday next.

LEASEHOLDERS (PURCHASE OF FEE SIMPLE) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

SEA FISHERIES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

LAND TENURE BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday next.

SUCCESSION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday, 6th April.

ACCESS TO MOUNTAINS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday next.

PARISH REGISTERS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday next.

REGISTRATION OF FIRMS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday next.

ALIENS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday next.

SOLICITORS (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday, 7th April.

APPOINTMENT OF HIGH SHERIFFS (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday, 7th April.

TITHE REDEMPTION BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday next.

SOLICITORS (MAGISTRACY) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday next.

SUPPLY.

Committee deferred till Friday.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Committee deferred till Friday.

ESTATES TAIL BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday next.

HIGHWAYS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS (IRELAND) (WOMEN) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY (FOREIGN SHIPOWNERS) AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday, 9th April.

LAND LAW (IRELAND) (No. 2) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday, next.

BAKEHOUSES BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday, 8th April.

MILITARY LANDS ACT (1892) AMENDMENT BILL.

Committee deferred till To-morrow.

MERSEY CHANNELS BILL.

Committee deferred till Tuesday, 6th April.

LICENSING EXEMPTION (HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS BILL.

On the Motion "That this House do now adjourn,"

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.) said he wished to give notice, for the general convenience of the House, that, in order to complete the proceedings on the Voluntary Schools Bill, he would to-morrow move that the Twelve o'clock Rule be suspended.

House Adjourned at Five Minutes before Six o'Clock.

The asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 25th March 1897.

EARL OF NORMANTON (CLAIM TO VOTE FOR REPRESENTATIVE PEERS FOR IRELAND).

Ordered and directed, That a Certificate be sent by the Clerk of the Parliaments to the Clerk of the Crown in Ireland, stating that the Lord Chancellor of the United Kingdom has reported to the House of Lords that the right of the Earl of Normanton to vote at the elections of Representative Peers for Ireland has been established to the satisfaction of him the said Lord Chancellor; and that the House of Lords has ordered such Report to be sent to the said Clerk of the Crown in Ireland; and it is hereby also ordered, That the said Report of the said Lord Chancellor be sent to the Clerk of the Crown in Ireland.

NEW PEERS.

James Williamson, esquire, having been created Baron Ashton of Ashton in the County Palatine of Lancaster—was (in the usual manner) introduced.

Alexander Smith Kinnear, one of the Lords of Session in Scotland, with the designation of Lord Kinnear, having been created Baron Kinnear of Spurness in the County of Orkney—was (in the usual manner) introduced.

ARMY ANNUAL BILL.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE) said this was the usual annual Bill for the purpose of keeping in force the Army Act, and it proposed no change in the existing law. He moved that the Bill be now Read a Second time.

Read 2ª (acording to Order); Committee negatived; and Bill to be Read 3ª To-morrow.

IRISH JUDGES AND MILITARY GUARDS (IRELAND).

*LORD MORRIS said he regretted extremely that he found it necessary to call their Lordships' attention to what, upon the statement of the Lord Chief Baron and Mr. Justice O'Brien at Cork Assizes, was a departure from an invariable practice that had existed from time immemorial in Ireland in connection with the administration of justice. In his charge to the Grand Jury at Cork Assizes the Lord Chief Baron mentioned the circumstances, and with the account he ventured to trouble their Lordships. The Lord Chief Baron—

> "referred at some length to the action of the Treasury in having refused to sanction the expenses of the usual military guard at the Judges' lodgings during the holding of the assizes, on the ground apparently that the expenditure could not properly be charged to either the civil or military list, though it had been going on for centuries. The Lord Chief Baron said there had been a departure at the present assizes from the constitutional usage which had existed as far back as our judicial records in this country went. Personally, he thought it a very small matter indeed, but he felt bound not to allow any privilege that belonged to the Judges of assize to be lost. It was a matter of importance that everything which ancient usage had ordained in reference to their proceedings should be observed until it was altered in the only mode in which it could be altered, namely, by Act of Parliament. They thought it right to communicate with the Lord Lieutenant and to request that immediate directions should be given by him in reference to the matter. His Excellency investigated the matter, and that morning they received a reply, in which it was explained that the sheriff made the usual requisition for a military escort and received a reply that it would be provided if the sheriff made arrangements for the accommodation of the men. In conjunction with his learned brother, Mr. Justice O'Brien, he had considered the question, and he did not hesitate to say that the action on the part of Her Majesty's Treasury was utterly unwarranted in law. Mr. Justice O'Brien, referring to the same subject, said that the demand made upon the sheriff for the expense of the accommodation was entirely groundless in point of law, and the duty should in any degree not be undertaken by the sheriff."

Speaking himself from an experience second to no one living, for on this day he completed a period of 30 years since he became one of Her Majesty's Judges—["hear hear!"]—he could say that this was the first occasion of a departure from the practice in the reception of Her Majesty's Judges upon holding an assize, and this in the leading city of the South of Ireland, the third city of that country in importance, and where there was a large military force that he should say was not very busy. This was the first occasion on which this practice, which added to the dignity not of the Judges, but of Her Majesty's Commission, had been departed from, and sentries on guard at the Judges' lodgings refused. The learned Lord Chief Baron was a Judge to whom every respect should be paid, and his learned colleague, Mr. Justice O'Brien, who in troublous times had asserted the fearlessness of the Bench. The matter concerned the administration of justice and the homage which in every free country was paid to the administration of justice through the functionaries who were charged with the administration. Why had there been this departure from ordinary practice, and on whose authority had it been made? The Lord Chief Baron seemed to think it was done by Her Majesty's Treasury, and he had the same thought himself, for he observed that in the House of Commons a Member asked, had not a saving of 14s. 1d. been effected? [*Laughter.*] He was credibly informed that that was an incorrect estimate, and that the actual sum was 15s. [*Laughter.*] But on whose authority had the recognised practice existing for centuries been departed from? Mr. Hanbury was reported to have said that the Treasury had nothing to do with it. So then the Department was absolved, and he should have been astonished if they had been the cause of the change, for during his long career he had had considerable intercourse with the Permanent Secretary to the Treasury for the time being, with former Secretaries now respected Members of their Lordships' House, and with the present Permanent Secretary, Sir Francis Mowatt, and speaking from no inconsiderable personal experience in connection with judicial business, he could say he had ever met every consideration and desire to comply with every reasonable request. But Mr. Hanbury had disavowed the charge on the part of the Treasury, the Irish Executive had disavowed it, the Lord Lieutenant being communicated with said substantially that he knew nothing about it, so the only remaining authority he could find by a sort of inductive process was the military authority. If it were not the Executive authority, if it were not the Treasury, as he had feared it was, endeavouring to make this 15s. a set-off against the balance of $2\frac{3}{4}$ millions, then he could only imagine it was the military authority; and seeing the Secretary for War in his place, he asked did the War Office take the responsibility of this departure from old established practice? The Lord Chief Baron would have been within his right, as representing the Queen's Commission, in ordering this to be done, and in inflicting a reasonable penalty for disobedience to his order. He further intended to move for the correspondence which had taken place between the Judges and the Lord Lieutenant on this subject. Personally he took no interest in it beyond that of wishing that the position of Judges should not be lowered by any underling in office, for he had often found that when these things came to be investigated they were found to have been done not by those high in authority, but by somebody masquerading in the high-sounding name of some official. Having called attention to this matter, he now asked, if this had been done by the military authorities, why it had been done, and he also moved for copies of the correspondence with the Judges acting under Her Majesty's Commission at the Cork Assizes on the subject.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE said the matter to which the noble and learned Lord had referred concerned more than one Department of the Government, and he had been asked to give the explanation required. There was one observation he might make at the outset, and that was that, whatever Department or Departments were responsible, there was no intention in any Department of the Government to be lacking in respect for the learned Judges. The facts, as he understood them, were as follows. In the first place the practice of using military guards at Judges' lodgings was a practice which obtained he believed only in Ireland. In other parts of the United Kingdom the necessary duties were performed either by the police or the "javelin-men," as they were termed, of the sheriff. The practice in Ireland was not quite the same. For some years past—not, he thought, for centuries, as the noble and learned Lord had told the House, but from comparatively recent times—it had been usual to set sentries over the Judges' lodgings when they were travelling on assize, and obviously there was a time when the country was in a very disturbed state when this precaution was by no means unnecessary. ["Hear, hear!"] Then arose the question who should be liable for the expenses occasioned by these guards. The noble and learned Lord had indulged in some pleasantries upon the smallness of the sum, and it was not very large, though not so trifling as the noble and learned Lord implied; at Cork it was an expense of between £40 and £50 a year. That charge was certainly borne for many years on Army Votes, and last year—1896—the charge was challenged by the War Office. The matter was not brought to his notice at the time, but it was one which the financial authorities at the War Office naturally considered they were bound to watch on the part of the Department, and he thought the House would admit there were some grounds for considering whether the charge was one that ought properly to be borne on the military funds. The necessity for the continuance of the practice as a measure of protection and for the personal safety of the Judges had certainly ceased to exist, and the ordinary maintenance of order was rather a duty for the Royal Irish Constabulary than for the troops. It was evident that these sentries were attached to the Judges' lodgings rather in order to enhance the dignity of the learned Judges, which, of course, all would desire to uphold—

*LORD MORRIS: The dignity of Her Majesty's Commission.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: That was the view of the War Office, and he believed that view was accepted by the Treasury. Their Lordships should know how this expense arose. It arose in this way. If the barracks were close to the Judges' lodgings the sentries were supplied from the barracks themselves; if, on the other hand, the barracks were at a considerable distance from the lodgings, it was clear that some special accommodation in or about the Judges' lodgings was required for the guard. It was the hire of that accommodation at Cork which had involved the cost which formed the subject of this discussion. They communicated in 1896 with the Government of Ireland upon the subject, with the result that the War Office was left under the impression that the charge would be defrayed by the sheriffs, and the military authorities in Ireland were accordingly given to understand that these charges would not in future fall upon the Army Votes. Unfortunately the matter did not go any further at the time, and no steps were taken by the Government of Ireland to arrive at an understanding with the sheriffs. The result was that the matter was left in suspense until the present year. In the present year, shortly before the Judges went on assizes, the sub-sheriff of the county put in a claim for the usual guard and also for an escort of troops. The demand for an escort was complied with at once, but the Assistant Adjutant General at Cork, acting under instructions, replied that he was not able to supply a guard unless accommodation for the men were forthcoming. The sub-sheriff intimated to him that no accommodation would be provided, and, therefore, no guard was sent. Upon that the learned Judges addressed to the Government of Ireland a remonstrance upon the action of the military authorities. That was how the matter stood at this moment, and nobody regretted more than he did that the result should have been to lead the learned Judges to suppose that there was any lack of desire to show them due respect. He thought the difficulty was one which could easily be met, and which certainly ought not to be allowed to recur. He could even indicate the direction in which they might look for a solution of the difficulty. He knew that there was very general apprehension, not only in Ireland, as to the undesirability of throwing any additional expense upon the sheriffs. [*Cheers.*] There was great difficulty in obtaining suitable sheriffs in Ireland, and they felt that if that difficulty were to be increased by involving them in any new liabilities the matter might become very serious. He was able to state, after communication with the Treasury, that the whole case of the liabilities and obligations of sheriffs was under consideration, and that no pains would be spared in order to render their position less irksome than it is at present. ["Hear, hear!"] As part of any settlement of the question that might be come to, he was prepared to say that, whether the arrangements for guards for the Judges were the same as those which had obtained heretofore, or whether any new arrangements were made, no additional expense should fall upon the sheriffs on that account. [*Cheers.*] That would get over the money difficulty, and the money difficulty was, after all, the only difficulty which had occurred in the present case. He hoped the noble Lord would accept his assurance that the matter would be seen to, and that they would endeavour to put it into proper shape.

*LORD MORRIS said he could only express his gratification at the conclusion of what the noble Marquess had stated—that the matter would be put in a proper state. But he could not allow it to pass that it was by any condescension on the part of the military authorities that there had always been a guard at the Judges' lodgings. The circumstances of England and of Ireland were very dissimilar in many ways. The Judges of England had their reception in the county towns, which, he was told, was a very imposing ceremony. The Judges of England had a large *entourage* of marshals and clerks and javelin-men and other attendants. The Irish Judges were never placed upon that great footing at all. It had been said that this was not a matter of very long usage. The Lord Chief Baron had said that as far as the judicial records went back it had been the usage. He himself remembered when Sir William Mansfield, afterwards Lord Sandhurst, was Commander of the Forces in Ireland, the colonel of a cavalry regiment in Limerick declined the request of the sheriff on this very subject. That must be 25 years ago. The sheriff remonstrated with Sir William Mansfield, and Sir William Mansfield gave the colonel a most severe reprimand. He also wrote to the Judges, who knew nothing at all of what had happened, and had not complained, a letter of the most apologetic character, and sent a copy of the reprimand, and asked them whether they would require him to do more, as he was quite ready to do it. This was a matter connected with the dignity of the Judges as Her Majesty's Commission, and with the administration of justice, and it ought not to be influenced by the consideration of a saving of 15s. a day, for that was really all it amounted to. He did not want to make the matter any warmer than it had been already. The Judges felt strongly upon it, and he would like to know what business the Financial Secretary to the War Office, whoever he might be, had to take it upon himself to decide a matter of this sort without reference to the noble Marquess. On a serious matter of this sort, why was not the Lord Lieutenant communicated with, and, if necessary, why was not a communication made to the Judges on the subject? He was quite satisfied that what he wished to be done was going to be done, and he could not ask for more.

THE EARL of CAMPERDOWN asked whether the inquiry into the obligations of sheriffs was to be confined to Ireland alone, or whether it was going to be extended to the case of sheriffs in England as well?

LORD HERSCHELL said he was very glad indeed to hear that the Treasury had under consideration the question of sheriffs, and how they might be relieved from the burdens at present falling upon them. He had long entertained the view, and he had expressed it before now in that House, that if the fees which were received in connection with legal proceedings were taken by the Treasury, and if the work were done by persons either appointed or arranged for by them, they would be ample for the purpose of discharging the duties now discharged by the under-sheriffs and also the necessary duties that fell upon the sheriffs. That which might be difficult or impossible in a particular county would be perfectly possible, and, he believed, would impose no burden on the Treasury if it were done in respect of the country at large. He hoped that was the direction which the views of the Treasury were taking, and he was led to anticipate that it was from the speech of the noble Marquess.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE said he understood the Chancellor of the Exchequer intended to consider the question, not only of the sheriffs of Ireland, but the position of sheriffs generally. ["Hear, hear!"] He would just like to add that he hoped his noble Friend Lord Morris would understand that the military authorities of Cork did not refuse to supply the troops. Two things were asked for—an escort to accompany the Judges and a guard. The escort was supplied at once. In reply to the request for the guard, the officer, whose business it was to look after his men, very naturally asked where the men were going to be put. He was told there was no place to put them, and therefore he did not send them.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

POST OFFICE CONSOLIDATION BILL. [H.L.]

Reported from the Joint Committee on Statute Law Revision Bills, with an Amendment, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House To-morrow.

House Adjourned at Five o'Clock, till To-morrow, a Quarter past Ten o'Clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 25th March 1897.

QUESTIONS.

WEIGHING OF CATTLE.

SIR HERBERT MAXWELL (Wigtown): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture (1) whether there is any particular form of weigh ticket provided to be issued to sellers and buyers, under Section 6 of the Markets and Fairs (Weighing of Cattle) Act 1887; (2) whether the weight and signature of the weigher must be filled in with pen and ink; and (3), if no form of ticket exists, whether the Board of Agriculture will issue a suitable form of ticket after the style specified in the third schedule of the Weights and Measures Act 1889, for the weighing of coal, to be used in all markets and auction markets not exempted from the Weighing of Cattle Acts?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. WALTER LONG, Liverpool, West Derby): The answer to the two first inquiries made by my hon. Friend is in the negative. With regard to the third, I am advised that I have no power to require the use of any particular form of ticket, and, under existing circumstances, I scarcely think that the issue of any model form would be of any practical advantage.

SIR HERBERT MAXWELL: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he is aware that in numerous instances market authorities not exempted from the Weighing of Cattle Acts have erected in their markets ordinary cart weigh-bridges fitted with pens 5½ or 6 feet long; whether he is aware that the cattle to be weighed on those machines frequently measure as much as 8½ or 9 feet in length; and whether such weigh-bridges constitute sufficient and suitable accommodation for weighing cattle in terms of Section 2 of the Weighing of Cattle Act 1891; and, if not, whether he will consider the propriety of issuing to market authorities a regulation prescribing a minimum length of 10 feet on every pen as necessary in order properly to comply with the provisions of the said Act, and calling for the removal of all existing pens of less length?

*MR. WALTER LONG: It is the case that in some instances weigh-bridges of the sizes mentioned have been erected, and that the full length of the cattle to be weighed might be as stated; but I am not prepared to say generally that in no case does such a weigh-bridge constitute a sufficient compliance with the requirements of the Act. If any specific complaint should be made to me, which, however, has not yet been the case, I would of course cause full inquiry to be made. In the recommendations we have issued on the subject it is suggested that the platform should be not less than 8 feet long and 3 feet wide.

RABIES.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture on what evidence the cases of canine hydrophobia recently reported in the Metropolitan district were diagnosed; how often was the certifying surgeon able to base his conclusions on (1) symptoms observed during life, and (2) an examination of the nervous centres of the suspected dog by the scientific methods practised at the Brown Institute; and whether the Department will in future require precise scientific detail before a dog is pronounced to be mad?

*MR. WALTER LONG: Ten cases of rabies were reported in the Metropolitan District during the first two months of the present year. In every case a *post-mortem* examination was conducted by the veterinary inspector of the local authority, whilst in two of the cases the dogs were seen alive by veterinary surgeons, and in two others, inoculation experiments were made at the Brown Institution. It is essential that the declaration of disease should continue to be made by the veterinary inspector of the local authority as contemplated by the Act, but it is proposed that in each case a full report should be made by that officer for the information of my own veterinary advisers.

CAVALRY HORSES (HOME ESTABLISHMENT).

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War how many horses would be required for the Cavalry on the Home Establishment on a war footing; and how many horses over six but under fourteen years of age are now maintained in the regiments on that establishment?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): If the whole of the home force were mobilised the Cavalry would require 9,193 horses. The peace establishment of horses of these regiments is 6,993, and of these 3,625 are between six and fourteen years of age.

CYCLES (CARRIAGE BY RAIL).

MR. WALTER HAZELL (Leicester): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that in nearly every Continental country the railways carry cycles free or as personal luggage, while in England a distinct and considerable charge is made for their conveyance; and whether he will use his influence with the railway companies to induce them to give to cyclists travelling by rail the same advantages that they enjoy in other countries?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. C. T. RITCHIE, Croydon): I communicated with the Railway Companies' Association, and have received a reply stating that the railway companies do not see their way to convey cycles free of charge.

BETTING ON RACECOURSES.

MR. E. H. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that at the Derby Hunt Steeplechases held at Derby on Tuesday last, betting was carried on in Tattersall's ring by bookmakers in the manner recently decided by the Queen's Bench Division to be unlawful, and that, although the police were present in force, they did not interfere; and whether, in virtue of the powers conferred upon him by No. 1 of the Regulations made under the authority of the Prosecution of Offences Acts, 1879 and 1884, he will order the Director of Public Prosecutions to institute criminal proceedings where evidence is available in cases in which the law appears to have been broken?

The HON. MEMBER also asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, with a view to secure uniformity throughout the country in the due execution of the Law, the Director of Public Prosecutions will, by a requisition in virtue of the regulations under the Prosecution of Offences Acts, 1879 and 1884, require the chief officer of every police district to furnish him with such information as the regulations prescribe respecting the offence of unlawful betting on racecourses and similar places within his district?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY, Lancashire, Blackpool): I cannot say more at present in answer to the hon. Member's Question than that I am carefully considering, with the assistance of the Law Officers, what is the scope and effect of the recent judgment, and what steps should be taken upon it. As regards his second

Question, the hon. Member is mistaken in supposing that the particular regulations to which he alludes apply to offences under Section 3 of the Betting Act.

SCOTTISH PRISON SERVICE.

Mr. C. L. ORR-EWING (Ayr Burghs): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in view of the fact that the Estimates for the year contain no proposal to increase the salary of any superior officer in the Scottish Prison Service, he would explain to the House why the recommendations of the Secretary for Scotland on this subject have not received favourable consideration at the hands of the Treasury?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. R. W. Hanbury, Preston): The Secretary for Scotland made six proposals. Four of these were approved in full. One was approved in part—we gave the two extra doctors he asked for, and made a suggestion as to re-arranging the salaries of the medical staff generally, instead of increasing the salaries of two in particular. The sixth request, *i.e.* that for increased pay to chaplains, was refused on the ground that it was not necessary, and this refusal was in accordance with the Report of the Committee of 1889, which inquired fully into this subject.

Mr. ORR-EWING: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in view of the fact that the salaries of the Prison Commissioners and prison warders in Scotland and England have been conformed to the same rate of pay, he could state what the reason is why those of the chaplains and medical officers are not so conformed, the fact of a discrepancy unfavourable to Scotland having been pointed out by them to the Commissioners and the Secretary for Scotland?

Mr. HANBURY: The hon. Member is wrong in his premiss. The salaries of the Prison Commissioners are not the same, nor are those of the prison warders. Without admitting that the pay should be the same, when the circumstances are different, the Treasury has expressed its readiness to consider a redistribution of emoluments in the case of medical officers.

RED SEA LIGHTS.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any fresh steps have been taken to procure the assent of the Ottoman Government to the placing of the four lights so much needed at the southern end of the Red Sea; and whether, in view of the recent stranding of a mail steamship on the Scilla Rock, and the danger to which vessels are exposed in that region, Her Majesty's Government will take steps to anchor lightships at least in the neighbourhood of Abu Ail and of the Mocha Shoal, if arrangements cannot be at present made for permanent lights?

*The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. G. Curzon, Lancashire, Southport): Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, acting under instructions from Her Majesty's Government, has addressed a circular to the representatives of the Great Powers, inviting their co-operation in a joint representation to the Turkish Government for authority to construct a number of fresh lights at the southern end of the Red Sea, including lights at Abu Ail and Mocha Shoal. Her Majesty's Government must await the result of these communications before considering any other possible arrangements.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will grant a return of the number of British ships stranded in the southern half of the Red Sea in the last 12 years?

Mr. RITCHIE: I shall be quite prepared to lay on the Table a Return giving the information desired by my right hon. Friend. Perhaps he will communicate with me as to the exact form in which the Return should be cast.

CHELSEA HOSPITAL (MEAT SUPPLY).

Captain DONELAN (Cork, E.): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether he is aware that the pensioners of Chelsea Hospital are largely rationed upon foreign refrigerated meat; and, whether this regulation will be reconsidered and rescinded with a view to provide these worn-out veterans with nutritious home-grown beef and mutton?

*THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. POWELL-WILLIAMS, Birmingham S.): No, Sir. The meat supplied to the in-pensioners is required, under the contract, to be English beef and mutton.

POST OFFICE (BOGESKEY, CO. CAVAN)

MR. S. YOUNG (Cavan, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he has received a memorial asking for a branch post office at Bogeskey, a few miles from Bailieborough, county Cavan; whether he is aware that, although the district is very populous, there is not a post office within a radius of three miles of this place, in consequence of which the people of the neighbourhood are greatly inconvenienced; and, whether the Department, in view of the urgent need of postal accommodation in this district, have taken any steps to supply the want?

MR. HANBURY: The Postmaster General has received the memorial referred to, and the question of establishing a post office at Bogeskey is under inquiry. The Postmaster General is not aware of the population of the district, but he is advised that Bogeskey is only two and not three miles from the nearest office. The necessary returns are not quite complete, but the result of the Inquiry, when arrived at, shall be communicated to the hon. Member.

MAGISTRACY (COUNTIES MEATH AND CAVAN.)

MR. YOUNG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he is aware that a Justice of the Peace for the counties of Meath and Cavan, and a land agent, is at present an arranging debtor under the Bankruptcy Act; and (2) whether the Lord Chancellor of Ireland has had his attention called to the fact?

*THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds, Central): The reply to both paragraphs is in the affirmative.

Captain Donelan.

HORSE BREEDING.

MR. ARTHUR JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has received the Report of a Joint Committee consisting of representatives from the Central and Associated Chambers of Agriculture, the Suffolk Horse Society, and the Clydesdale Horse Society, on the matter of Government grants for cart stallions and, whether in order to enable farmers to secure the services of sound cart stallions at moderate fees, he will give the same grant towards providing these stallions in the various counties as is now given for thoroughbred stallions?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir MICHAEL HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): My hon. Friend has been good enough to send me the Report of the Committee to which he refers. But, if action on the matter is desired, it should in the first instance be brought before the Royal Commission on Horsebreeding, who are entrusted with the distribution of the sum granted in premiums for the encouragement of horsebreeding. I have received no recommendation, either from that Commission, or from the Board of Agriculture, on the subject and though I certainly cannot speak with any authority, I am myself disposed to doubt whether premiums for cart stallions are necessary for the purpose suggested in the question.

CERTIFICATES OF MARRIAGE.

MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Notts, Mansfield): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate (1) whether he is aware that, notwithstanding that Section 6 of the Marriage Notice (Scotland) Act, 1878, provides that a registrar's certificate of the publication of a notice of marriage shall for all purposes of law be of the same force as a certificate by a session clerk of the proclamation of banns, the Registrar General for Scotland has instructed his registrars that the operation of the Act is limited to parties married and resident in Scotland, and that a session clerk's certificate is still required for a marriage in England; and, (2) whether that construction of the Act has received the sanction of the Law Officers of the Crown; and, if not, whether, as the practice of

English registrars in regard to the acceptance of Scotch registrar's certificates differs, their opinion on the point will be taken?

*The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. Graham Murray, Buteshire): Immediately after the passing of the Act in question, statutory regulations were issued by the then Registrar General in communication with the Law Officers, and with the approval of the Home Secretary. These regulations instructed the registrars in Scotland that the Act could not properly be applied where both or either of the parties to an intended marriage were resident in England, or elsewhere out of Scotland. With regard to the second part of the Question, there is no difference of view between the register offices of England and Scotland as to the acceptance of Scottish registrar's certificates. I think it would be unwise in a matter possibly affecting the validity of marriages, to endeavour to disturb the view of the law and the practice following thereon, which have obtained the sanction of universal acceptance for so long a time.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY.

Mr. JAMES DALY (Monaghan, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland will he explain the reason why a County Inspector having a Divisional Commissioner in his district receives £50 per annum more than a County Inspector having no Divisional Commissioner in his district; whether he can say what is this £50 per annum paid for; and whether he intends discontinuing the payment of the sum mentioned in future, considering the intended reduction of the police force in Ireland?

*Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: The allowance referred to has been paid for many years to three County Inspectors at Divisional head-quarters in consideration of the assistance rendered by them to three of the Divisional Commissioners who are not Constabulary officers, and for whom, in the event of absence on leave, etc., the Divisional County Inspector acts as *locum tenens*. There is no intention to discontinue the allowance, as the reduction of the force makes no appreciable difference in the extent of the duty for which it was originally provided.

Mr. JASPER TULLY (Leitrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether an inquiry has been held by the Inspector General of Royal Irish Constabulary into charges preferred against Constable Lester, of the County Leitrim force; whether he can state the nature of the charges, and the result of the inquiry; and what action, if any, has been taken in the matter?

*Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: An inquiry was held by direction of the Inspector General into the subject matter of a complaint against the constable named in the Question by a cycling firm in Dublin, and as a result of that inquiry the constable was admonished and transferred at his own expense to another county.

THAMES POLICE COURT.

Mr. C. J. DARLING (Deptford): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the complaints made by the prosecuting solicitor in the course of the hearing of a charge of stealing a horse and van with its contents, made against Robert Crundall last week before Mr. Dickinson, sitting at the Thames Police Court, such complaints being to the effect that the police had not rendered the assistance they should give in the matter; whether the learned magistrate stated that he had previously expressed a strong opinion on the action of the police in such cases; and, whether, in consequence, further instructions will be given to the police by the proper authority?

Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: Complaints were made, I understand, by the prosecuting solicitor. I am not aware of any statement or expression of opinion in regard to the action of the police on the part of the magistrate. I cannot see, from my knowledge of the facts of the case, which I shall be happy to communicate to the hon. Member, that there was any default on the part of the police, or that further instructions are called for.

QUEEN'S JUBILEE PROCESSION.

Mr. DARLING: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to allegations that certain owners of houses are taking steps to turn out their tenants from houses on the route of the procession of Her Majesty to St. Paul's and back; whether this is being done especially on the south of the Thames; and whether any steps, by diverting the route of the procession or otherwise, will be taken to prevent this conduct from inflicting loss and inconvenience upon the tenants?

SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: I have made some inquiries since I answered a similar question on Tuesday, and learn that there are one or two such cases in the district south of the Thames. As I explained on Tuesday, I have no power to take any action in the matter, however much I might wish to do so. If, however, such action unfortunately became at all general, I have no doubt that representation will be made in the proper quarter, and there is time to change the route. [*Loud cheers.*]

MR. HUDSON KEARLEY (Devonport): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether he can give any details of the arrangements being made for Members of Parliament to view Her Majesty's Jubilee procession; and how many seats will be allotted to each Member of the stands it is contemplated erecting?

MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether the arrangements for enabling Members of Parliament to view the Royal procession on the 22nd of June will include their wives also?

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers may I ask him a subsidiary question, which seems by inadvertence to have been omitted; it is whether, in the case of a Member who has no wife of his own, he will be allowed to bring anybody else's wife? [*Laughter.*]

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. AKERS-DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's): I stated in reply to the hon. Member for Devonport the other day that provision would be made for Members of Parliament to see Her Majesty's procession. I also asked the hon. Member to give me a little longer notice before asking me to answer any questions as to details. I am sorry I cannot answer the question of the hon. Member for the Mansfield Division, but I will give him the information as soon as I can. Perhaps the same answer will apply to my hon. Friend the Member for Lynn Regis. [*Laughter.*]

ARMY CLOTHING DEPARTMENT.

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether he is aware that the women workers in the Army Clothing Factory at Pimlico, known as the outside division, numbering between 150 and 200, are to be discharged on the 31st instant; whether most of these women are the deserving widows of old soldiers, and have done the work satisfactorily for nearly a quarter of a century; whether the reason alleged for depriving these, in many instances, aged women of their only means of livelihood, is that it is to prevent sweating, whereas the work is to be given to sweating contractors; and, whether he will consider the advisability of allowing those now employed to die out, or at least give some little annuity to those over a certain age who have many years' service, so as to prevent them coming on the rates?

*MR. POWELL-WILLIAMS: After the 31st instant, the practice of giving out work to be executed in the workers' homes will be discontinued. This practice has been found to be very objectionable. The work is often done under conditions which are insanitary, and which involve a liability to infection on the part both of the troops and of the workpeople at the clothing factory; while strong suspicion exists of subletting on terms which amount to sweating. The number of people affected is 44 women and three men. Some of the women are widows of soldiers. None of the work taken from these people will be given to sweating contractors, nor are any sweating contractors allowed to take War Office contracts. The work hitherto given out will be done in the Factory, and all the workers in question who are under 65 years of age (namely, 36 women and two men) will have the option of coming into the Factory. Those who do not avail themselves of the option, or are over 65, will be given a gratuity. ["Hear, hear!"]

MR. JOHN DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked whether it would not be possible to make an exception in the case of the widows of soldiers who had fought in the Indian Mutiny and in the Crimea?

*MR. POWELL-WILLIAMS: I am afraid that it would not be possible nor just to make any exceptions. The real difficulty is that, as long as this system obtains, we are doing ourselves what we absolutely forbid our contractors to do.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked whether the change that was to be made would involve any alteration in the amount of work that was put out to contract?

*MR. POWELL-WILLIAMS: No; I said before that the work that is now done by these old ladies will be done in the Factory.

NAVAL INTERPRETERS.

MR. J. W. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if he could state to the House how many officers of the Navy are qualified as interpreters, and in what languages; and what steps, if any, are being taken to encourage the study of Foreign languages among Naval officers?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): Forty-eight officers on the active list of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines are qualified as interpreters in the principal European languages and 86 in Oriental languages. A knowledge of French is required at the examination for entry of officers in the Royal Navy, and prizes are given during the period of training in the *Britannia* for proficiency in this language, and for proficiency in French and other modern languages at the annual examination of junior officers serving afloat. Civilians are employed on certain foreign stations to instruct the junior officers in modern languages, and by special gratuities, allowances, and facilities for studying abroad, officers are encouraged to qualify as interpreters in both European and Oriental languages.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES asked how many of these officers were able to interpret Swanhili?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: I am unable to state the precise number, but a good many.

MR. CROMBIE asked whether the right hon. Gentleman's answer referred only to Naval officers or to Naval and Marine officers?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: I have only sufficient information to enable me to answer the hon. Member's Question upon the Paper.

LAND COMMISSION (IRELAND).

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he can give any explanation of the fact that, in recent land cases heard in Longford by Mr. Crean's Sub-Commission, the reductions given averaged only 19·9 per cent., whilst those given in North East Ulster, and also in Munster, averaged 28 per cent.; and, (2) whether any report has been made by this Sub-Commission to justify such a departure from the decisions in other parts of Ireland?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: No such report as is suggested in the second paragraph has been made. I am unable to say whether the fact is as alleged in the first paragraph; nor, if it is, am I in a position to offer any explanation on the subject.

EVICTED TENANTS (COUNTY CAVAN).

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that there are 11 evicted tenants on the property of the Countess of Morley, in the parish of Killinagh, County Cavan; whether these tenants have applied for the benefits of the Evicted Tenants' Clause of the Land Act of 1896; and can he state whether their applications have yet received the attention of the Irish Land Commission?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The evicted tenants on the estate referred to have not applied to the Land Commission under Section 47 of the Act of 1896.

LAW COURTS (INJURY TO WORKMEN).

CAPTAIN NORTON: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether it has been brought to his notice that an employé under the Office of Works, who was injured through the negligence of another workman when on duty at the Law Courts in December 1895, was offered the sum of £10 by the surveyor in compensation for the injury received; was the surveyor authorised to make this offer in the belief that it was sufficient compensation; and, if so, why was the sum increased to £67 15s. 8d. at a later period, all the circumstances connected with the injury being well known from the outset; and will he explain how it was that the man upon resuming work found that he was no longer an employé of the Government, but of the contractor for the Office of Works, and placed upon a lower rate of wages?

MR. AKERS-DOUGLAS: It is not the case that an offer of £10 was made to the employé injured at the Courts of Justice as compensation for personal injuries. That sum was suggested as an immediate payment for the loss of clothing, and in consideration of expenses which had been incurred during illness, and which he was not in a position to pay. Whilst incapacitated he received three months' full pay and six weeks' half pay, and has since been awarded a gratuity of £67 15s. 8d. in pursuance of the statutory enactment for such cases, besides being regularly employed on very light duties under the contractors of the Office of Works at the current rate of wages for an engineer's labourer. The amount earned is less than formerly, as he prefers not to work full time, otherwise he could earn more. There is at present no direct employment of a suitable nature which could be given him. He has never been in the position of an established employé of the Government.

IRISH MAIL SERVICE.

MR. JOHN DILLON: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he is aware that at Fintona—the largest and most important town in South Tyrone—the mails are not delivered on Sunday mornings till 10 o'clock, though they have been lying at Omagh (six miles distant) from 3 a.m. on the same morning; also that the latest hour for posting letters at Fintona on Sundays is 4 o'clock p.m., though these letters are conveyed to Omagh and lie there till 10 p.m. the same evening; and whether he will remedy this inconvenience by having the delivery and dispatch of mails on Sundays altered at Fintona to reasonable hours, say 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. respectively?

MR. HANBURY: The mails are due at Fintona on Sunday at 9.30 a.m., and the delivery commences at 9.50 a.m. On weekdays the service to Fintona is by train; but on Sunday no trains are run, and the mails are conveyed by a postman on foot, leaving Omagh—where they have been lying, as the hon. Member presumes, for some hours—at 6 a.m. This is the usual hour of departure for rural postmen, and, in this case, he reaches Fintona, the last place on his walk, at 9.30 a.m. The Sunday dispatch from Fintona is at 4.40 p.m. As a rule, rural postmen are allowed to return from the terminal point of their journeys on Sundays in the forenoon, about one hour after the completion of the delivery, so that the inhabitants of Fintona have the advantage of an exceptionally late dispatch. The Postmaster General sees no reason for disturbing the present arrangements.

POST OFFICE ESTABLISHMENTS (CORK POST OFFICE).

MR. J. P. FARRELL: On behalf of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. MAURICE HEALY), I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, if he could state in which of the five scales of wages for provincial postmen, as settled by the Report of Lord Tweedmouth's Committee, the Cork Post Office will be placed?

MR. HANBURY: The town postmen at Cork will be placed on scale No. 4, namely, that rising from 17s. by 1s. 6d. to 24s. It is intended very shortly to issue a general notice to the staff on this subject.

DONCASTER TOWN MOOR (HORSE RACING).

SIR JOHN BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether the Board have given their consent to the permanent inclosure of a portion of Doncaster Town Moor for purposes in connection with horse racing; if such consent has been given, whether, having regard to the provisions of Section 3 of the Law of Commons Amendment Act

1893, it was preceded by a local inquiry; and could he state what are the benefits to the neighbourhood anticipated which rendered such inclosure expedient?

*MR. LONG: Yes, Sir; I have authorised the Corporation of Doncaster to enclose about an acre of the Town Moor, which covers 201 acres, for the purpose of erecting certain additional permanent stands. The intention of the Corporation to apply for such authority was advertised in three successive issues of the Doncaster newspapers, but inasmuch as I only received a single letter dissenting from the proposal it did not appear to me that any local inquiry was necessary. The proposal of the Corporation seemed to me to be well calculated to promote the health, comfort, and convenience of the inhabitants of the populous places in the neighbourhood of the Town Moor, which is the consideration to which I am bound to have regard in dealing with applications of the kind.

CRETE.

MR. J. C. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can state what definite steps are being taken to bring about the progressive withdrawal of the Turkish troops from Crete, in accordance with the terms of the Identic Note presented by the Great Powers: and whether, with a view to the speedy pacification of Crete, Her Majesty's representative will be instructed to urge upon the Powers the advisability of securing the retirement of the Turkish forces from the island with the greatest dispatch possible?

*MR. CURZON: Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople has been instructed to lose no opportunity of urging the withdrawal of the Turkish troops from Crete; but it is clear that such a step would be greatly facilitated by the withdrawal of the Greek forces from the island, which, according to the terms of the supplementary note addressed to the Porte on March 5th, was to be a preliminary condition of the progressive reduction of the Ottoman forces to which the hon. Member refers.

MR. FLYNN: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether a proposal for the contemporaneous withdrawal of the Turkish and Greek troops from Crete is under the consideration of the Powers?

*MR. CURZON: I cannot answer that Question without notice.

MR. DILLON: I desire to ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs a Question of which I have given him private notice—whether his attention has been called to a letter from Mr. Sandwith, late Consul in Crete, in *The Times* of to-day, in which the following statements are made:—

> "In the best of seasons Crete does not raise enough grain for the support of its inhabitants, and it is precisely during the few months preceding harvest, which begins at the end of May, that the pinch of scarcity is felt. As, in present circumstances, there seems to be no Power capable of affording protection to unarmed Christians, who are thus shut out from the market towns on the coast, could not vessels carrying only food products be exempted from the blockade, and allowed to land their cargoes in certain creeks, which should be duly notified? Unless some such measure be adopted, the Christian peasantry must perish on their barren mountains—"

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member is not in order in reading a letter from a newspaper, and asking whether the right hon. Gentleman's attention has been called to it. If the hon. Gentleman vouches for certain facts, he can ask a Question on them.

MR. DILLON: I have completed the quotation, and will ask my Question. I wish to know what precaution has the Government taken to secure that the Christian people of Crete shall not be subjected to famine by the blockade, and on what grounds the Government justify the third article of the proclamation of the blockade, which prohibits the landing of provisions for the interior of the island, while it does not restrict the landing of provisions in those parts of the coast where the Mohammedan people are congregated?

*MR. CURZON: I would ask the hon. Gentleman to put the Question on the Paper, and I will be better able to answer him to-morrow.

MR. BRYNMOR JONES (Swansea, Borough): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, under the terms of the notice of blockade of Crete, published in the Supplement to *The London Gazette* on the 20th March, a British ship carrying a cargo belonging to a British subject, consigned to an agent at a Cretan port, for delivery to a Cretan merchant at a place in the interior of the island, is liable to be visited and searched by a British or Russian war ship and prevented from delivering its cargo at its port of destination in Crete; whether, under the terms of the said notice of blockade, a ship, belonging to a subject of, and registered under the flag of, the United States of America, carrying a cargo belonging to an American subject, consigned in like manner to an agent at a Cretan port for delivery in the interior of the island, is liable to be visited and searched by a British war ship and prevented from delivering its cargo at its port of destination; whether a state of war exists between Great Britain on the one hand and the Kingdom of Greece or the Ottoman Empire on the other hand; if not, under what rules of international or municipal law will the commander of a British or Russian ship be justified in taking the action above suggested; and is the notice of blockade to be construed as limited to merchandise coming within the description of contraband of war?

*MR. CURZON: Ships as described in the Question are liable to be visited and searched by the ships of war of the Great Powers, and to be prevented from delivering their cargoes, if in the opinion of the Admirals such delivery would be calculated to encourage further disorder in the island. No state of war exists between Great Britain and either Greece or Turkey. The blockade of Crete is understood by Her Majesty's Government to be in the nature of a measure of police enforced (with the consent of the Sovereign Power) by the Admirals who have control of the coast, with the object of preventing further fighting in the island. The instructions to the British Admiral are to the effect that he should apply the rules of the blockade in accordance with these principles. The question of contraband of war does not arise.

MR. JOHN MORLEY (Montrose Burghs): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether there is any objection to laying on the Table the specific orders given to the Admirals as to the blockade? There are precedents, as I understand, for laying such orders on the Table.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Are we to understand that the sanction which was pleaded by the Government for this interference with shipping was the authority of the Sultan?

*MR. CURZON: I said nothing of the kind. The sanction under which the Admirals acted was that of the Great Powers from whom they receive their orders. In reply to the right hon. Gentleman I should be glad if he would kindly put his Question on the Paper.

MR. BRYNMOR JONES: May I ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs which is the sovereign Power he referred to in his answer to my Question?

*MR. CURZON: The hon. and learned Gentleman knows as well as myself that the sovereign Power of Crete is the Sultan. When I said that the consent of the Sultan had been secured I did not say that that was the sanction under which we were acting.

MR. BRYNMOR JONES: Is there any precedent for such a blockade, which the right hon. Gentleman has described as a police measure?

*MR. CURZON: I should need prolonged study before I could answer that Question. [*Laughter and cheers.*]

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): May I, without notice, ask the right hon. Gentleman an easy question [*laughter*]—whether in this blockade the old principle will be regarded—free ships take free goods?

*MR. CURZON: I am afraid the Question the hon. Member has put does not correspond to his definition of an easy question. I should require time to consider it.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Is not the principle an entirely new one?

CAPTAIN NORTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman answer the last part of the Question of the hon. Member?

MR. REES DAVIES (Pembrokeshire): May I ask whether the United States consented to the second paragraph of the Question?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! That is not raised in the Question.

*MR. CURZON: The first sentence of my reply, in which I used the word "ships," referred to the ships spoken of in the first and second paragraphs.

MR. JAMES BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): Will it apply to the ships of other countries also?

*MR. CURZON: Yes.

Mr. MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether two British vessels, which started before the blockade, will be forbidden to take on board cargoes of oil on the Cretan coast; whether this stringent application of the law of blockade will, in this instance be relaxed, in accordance with the precedent at the beginning of the Civil War in the United States, when Lord Lyons notified the British Consuls on the 11th May 1861, that neutral vessels would be allowed 15 days to leave port after the actual commencement of the blockade; whether such vessels were with or without cargoes; and whether the cargoes were shipped before or after the commencement of the blockade?

*Mr. CURZON: Shipments of oil have been sanctioned by the Admirals at the seven ports occupied by the Great Powers, and permission has been given to the ships of Messrs. Whittall to take on board their cargoes. British merchant ships can communicate with any of the ports above-mentioned.

MULLINGAR UNION (OUTDOOR RELIEF).

Mr. TULLY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether a sworn Inquiry has been held by the direction of the Local Government Board into the administration of outdoor relief in the Mullingar division of the Mullingar union; (2) whether he can state if the outdoor relief books were properly checked from time to time by the officials responsible for their accuracy; (3) what has been the Report of the Local Government Board auditor on the nature of the abuses alleged to exist; and (4), what action (if any), has been taken with regard to the officials concerned in the transactions?

*Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: The reply to the first paragraph is in the affirmative. The outdoor relief books were checked by the Union clerk from time to time, but the irregularities occurred owing to the practice adopted by the Guardians in ordering relief for indefinite periods contrary to the Rules of the Local Government Board. The auditor disallowed relief in the case of 22 persons who were not destitute, and surcharged the presiding chairman with the illegal expenditure incurred, and he also disallowed relief in 12 other cases and surcharged the Relieving Officer with the cost of same. The auditor further stated that in view of the unduly large amount of outdoor relief distributed in the Mullingar as compared with other Rural Unions, amounting as it did to more than £3,000 a year, the Guardians by neglecting to revise at regular intervals all cases on the relief lists in future, would render themselves liable to surcharges which the auditor would enforce. As a result of this Inquiry the Relieving Officer, whom the Local Government Board pronounced unfitted for the position, resigned his office. The Board also pointed out to the Guardians that they had failed in their duty as trustees of the ratepayers and administrators of the Poor Law, and requested them to take prompt and decisive action to remedy the abuses brought under their notice.

HOUSE OF COMMONS TERRACE (STRANGERS).

Sir HENRY FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether there is any limit to the number of strangers which any Member is entitled to introduce to the Terrace while the House is sitting?

Mr. AKERS-DOUGLAS: In reply to the right hon. Gentleman, I have to say that the regulations of the admission of strangers to the House is a matter which does not rest with me, but with the authorities of the House. But I understand that there is no limit to the number of ladies which each hon. Member may introduce.

Sir HENRY FOWLER: Arising out of that, may I ask whether it is correct that last Session the wife of an hon. Member issued cards for an "At Home" on the Terrace, inviting a large number of guests, and whether this is open to all the wives of all the other Members? [*Laughter.*]

Mr. AKERS-DOUGLAS: I was not aware of the fact that a Member had given an "At Home" on the Terrace, but I do know that the Terrace is often greatly overcrowded during the season; and last Session I stated that my views coincided with those of the right hon. Gentleman, that some limit might with advantage be placed upon the number of ladies which each Member might introduce.

CHANNEL FLEET.

SIR LEONARD LYELL (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the arrangements for the summer cruise of the Channel Fleet include a visit of part of the Fleet to the Port of Lerwick in Shetland, which has several times been petitioned for by the inhabitants of Lerwick?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: No arrangements have been made for a visit by the Channel Fleet to Lerwick.

PUBLIC WORKS (SCOTLAND).

MR. J. McLEOD (Sutherland): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury (1) whether he can state the reason for the large diminution in the Vote in next year's Estimates in connection with certain public works and for improved communications and other purposes within the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, the Vote last year amounting to £36,200, and this year to only £25,500; (2) whether he is aware that this decrease of £10,700 in the Vote will render absolutely nugatory the provisions of the Western Highlands and Islands Works Act, 1891, so far as any prospective works are concerned; (3) whether he is also aware that notwithstanding the decrease stated the administration charges are only decreased by £64; and (4) whether the Scottish Office have expressed themselves satisfied with the reduced amount of the Vote?

MR. HANBURY: The reason for the reduction in this Vote is the fact that the Vote is admittedly of an exceptional and temporary character. The full amount recommended by the Highlands and Islands Commission of 1890 has now been expended, and the time has therefore obviously arrived for a decrease, so far as it can be effected with due regard to works already in progress. The answer to paragraph 2 is No. Provision may be made for prospective works out of the amount, now accumulating, which was devoted to this purpose by the Agricultural Rates, Congested Districts, and Burgh Land Tax Relief (Scotland) Act of last Session. The answer to the third paragraph is Yes. The Scottish Office have accepted the reduced amount of the Vote, with the exception of the decreased grant for minor roads. They have asked for an increase of this, and it has been conditionally assented to.

AGRICULTURAL RATING ACT, 1896 (EXTENSION TO IRELAND).

MR. EDWARD CARSON (Dublin University): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can now state when he will be prepared to bring in the Bill for extending the Agricultural Rating Act, 1896, to Ireland; whether the amount to be provided by the Bill for the relief of taxation in Ireland has been ascertained; and whether the calculation of the amount due to Ireland is based upon the treatment of Ireland as a separate entity for financial purposes?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I have already several times in the course of the present Session stated that it is not the intention to introduce an Agricultural Rating Bill for Ireland. By an Act passed in the last Session an equivalent grant at the rate of nine-eightieths of the sum payable under the Agricultural Rating Act of 1896 was secured to Ireland. The precise amount payable has not yet been definitely determined for either country, but will, I understand, be known before the end of the present month.

MR. CARSON: May I ask whether the amount will be ascertained on the same principle as if Ireland were composed of English counties?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I have already stated the principle on which it will be ascertained.

MR. T. LOUGH (Islington, S.): Will the amount, whatever it may be, be allocated in the same way as under the present Bill, and when will a Bill be introduced?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: Similar questions have been asked. I ask the right hon. Gentleman to wait until he sees the Irish legislation of this year before I can answer that.

POST OFFICE WAGES.

Sir JOHN LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, what is the scale of population which regulates the maximum rates of wages in post offices in the United Kingdom?

Mr. HANBURY: The maximum wages of Post Office servants is not solely governed by the scale of population of any town, but by the general circumstances of each case, and by the current value of labour in the town and neighbourhood.

CANAL NAVIGATION.

Sir JOHN BRUNNER: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether it is his intention to call for a second return, under the Railway and Canal Traffic Act 1888, giving information as to canals with regard to maximum draught of boats, position and dimensions of locks, the position of tunnels and bridges with the amount of headway thereunder, and also with regard to the amount (tonnage) of traffic, taking care that through traffic is distinguished from local traffic. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will allow me to say that this question does not purport to be an exhaustive description of the return.

Mr. RITCHIE: Yes, Sir, with this exception, that the return will not show the position of bridges, etc. It will indicate, however, the maximum size of boats including headway.

Sir J. BRUNNER: May I ask whether the return will give the minimum headway under the bridges?

Mr. RITCHIE: It will give the minimum size of the boats including the headways.

RAILWAY ACCIDENTS (CORONERS' INQUESTS).

*Mr. F. A. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade (1) whether, in the case of either of the inquests recently held at Bristol on the deaths of the carriage washer Niblett or the driver Little, the coroner applied to the Board of Trade under Section 8 of the Railway Regulation Act 1871, for a representative of the Board to attend as Assessor; (2) whether any coroner has in railway accidents so applied during the past five years; and, if so, in how many instances; what report, if any, was made by the coroner to the Board of Trade in the inquests on Niblett and Little; and (3) whether the Board of Trade ordinarily receives or has power to require any report to be made by a coroner to the Board in the case of railway fatalities?

Mr. RITCHIE: The answer to the first paragraph of the hon. Member's Question is in the negative. In eight cases, applications have been made for the appointment of an Assessor. The coroner made returns of the two accidents referred to. This is the duty of the coroner under Section 5 of the Railway Regulation Act 1873. The returns are made to the Home Office and transmitted to the Board of Trade.

*Mr. CHANNING asked whether the return made by the coroner merely gave the finding of the jury or contained all the facts of the case?

Mr. RITCHIE said he did not know as to that. He referred the hon. Member to Section 5 of the Act of 1871.

SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION (COUNTING VOTING PAPERS).

Mr. JOHN BRIGG (York, W.R. Keighley): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether his attention has been directed to the judgment given by Mr. Justice Hawkins and Mr. Justice Kennedy in the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court of Justice, on 17th February, on the counting of voting papers at School Board Elections, and, whether in view of the uncertainty and difficulty therein declared to exist, the Lords of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education will so revise their general Order on the subject as to remove all doubt and ambiguity?

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Sir John Gorst, Cambridge University): Yes, Sir, the Committee of Council will consider the matter.

MASSACRE AT TOKAT.

Mr. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any information has reached the Foreign Office respecting the disturbances at Tokat, in the vilayet of Sivas, and the attack upon Armenian worshippers when assembled in church; and, whether representations have been made by the representatives of the Powers with a view to the maintenance of order and the protection of the lives of Armenian subjects in that district?

MR. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is able to give any information as to the reported massacre at Tokat; and what steps will be taken with reference to the matter?

MR. BRYCE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what information Her Majesty's Government can give regarding the massacre of Armenians reported to have taken place recently at Tokat; whether the remonstrances which the Ambassadors of the six Powers are reported to have addressed to the Sultan regarding this massacre have been collective remonstrances; and, if so, what is their nature; and what steps, if any, beyond remonstrance, Her Majesty's Government propose to take in view of this renewal of massacres of the Armenian Christians?

MR. T. C. H. HEDDERWICK (Wick Burghs): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Government have received confirmatory intelligence of the reported massacre of Armenian Christians at Tokat, in the vilayet of Sivas, on Thursday last; and, if so, whether the Government, in the face of the renewal of such atrocities, in despite of the repeated warnings addressed to the Sultan by the Prime Minister of Great Britain, consider it desirable to proclaim their adhesion to the policy of maintaining the integrity of the Ottoman Empire.

*MR. CURZON: The news of the disturbance at Tokat has been officially confirmed by Her Majesty's Vice Consul at Sivas, who has reported that the disturbance lasted eight hours, that about a hundred Armenians were killed, and that general pillage was going on in the town. He did not say anything about Armenian worshippers being attacked in Church. On the first receipt of the news, urgent representations were made to the Porte by Her Majesty's Ambassador, to the effect that if steps were not immediately taken for the removal of the authorities at Tokat and the punishment of those guilty of the murders, it would be clear that they had been allowed by the Palace; that it would be the duty of the Ambassador to report in that sense to his Government, and that the effect that the renewal of such crimes would have upon the action of Europe under present circumstances might be imagined. Representations were also made by the other Great Powers at Constantinople. Stringent orders, of which copies were communicated to Her Majesty's Embassy, were forthwith issued by the Porte with reference to the punishment of the offenders, and the prevention of renewed outrage; and the Ambassadors were informed that orders have been telegraphed to the Vali of Sivas for the dismissal and arrest of the Governor, the Commander of the Gendarmerie, and the Commissioner of Police at Tokat, and that a special Commission, which the Sultan has ordered to proceed at once to Tokat, would have full power to summarily try the authors of the disorders and all persons directly or indirectly implicated.

MR. BRYCE: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the remonstrances were addressed separately or collectively by the Ambassadors?

*MR. CURZON: What actually happened was this. The Ambassadors had convened a meeting for the purpose of addressing a collective representation to the Sultan in the sense which I have already spoken of when referring to the communication of the British Ambassador, and calling for immediate action on the part of the Turkish Government. While that meeting was still in session a reply came from the Turkish Government that they had taken the steps which I have announced in the shape of sending out a Commission, and of ordering the dismissal and arrest of the officials concerned. That being so the Powers joined upon a collective note to the Porte taking act of this information.

MR. FLYNN: In case the steps taken by the Ambassadors fail, would the Great Powers—(*Cries of* "Order!")

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! Notice must be given of that Question.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: When my right hon. Friend says "taking act of" this, does he mean taking note?

*Mr. CURZON: I have used a very familiar phrase, which I am certain is as well known to the hon. Gentleman as it is to myself.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): Are we to understand from the right hon. Gentleman's reply that the dismissal of these officials and the appointment of a special Commission to try the criminals was subsequent to the representations made to the Porte, or was it before the representations?

*Mr. CURZON: I believe it was subsequent to the first representation made by the British Ambassador, the terms of which I have given to the House.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): Can the right hon. Gentleman give the House any information as to the composition of the Commission?

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! Notice must be given of that Question.

INDIAN FAMINE.

*Mr. C. E. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): On behalf of the hon. Baronet the Member for Banffshire (Sir William Wedderburn), I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that the Government of India is about to migrate from Calcutta to Simla; and whether any steps will be taken by which, as in former famines, the Viceroy may take personal cognisance of the measures of famine relief in the different Provinces?

The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Lord George Hamilton Middlesex, Ealing): I am aware that the Government of India is about to migrate to Simla, from which place the Viceroy will be in no less rapid and easy communication with the officers in the famine districts than if he were at Calcutta. I may add that, owing to the publication of the famine codes, which establish general principles for the administration of relief, the intervention of the supreme Government is not now required as it was in former famines.

*Mr. C. E. SCHWANN (for Sir William Wedderburn): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India, whether he is aware that there is a general complaint in India that the wages paid to labourers on relief works are insufficient to secure to them one full meal every day; and whether, to test the sufficiency of the wages, he will direct that labourers admitted to relief works should be weighed at the time of admission, and should subsequently be weighed from time to time?

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: I am not aware of any general complaint as to the insufficiency of the wages paid to labourers on relief works. The famine codes prescribe the rates of wages, which bear a fixed proportion to the local value of food, and rise and fall with it. These rates are intended, as recommended in the Report of the Famine Commission, to "provide sufficient food for a labourer's or a dependent's support," with "a margin against accidental error on the side of deficiency." I am also aware that the local Governments and local officers are carefully watching the effect of the wage rates on the condition of the people receiving relief, and the weekly reports state the general condition of those upon relief work as good and fair. The hon. Gentleman can hardly be serious in suggesting that in addition to the immense labours devolving upon relief officers should be added the duty of periodically weighing the three millions of men, women, and children who are now in receipt of relief from Government. [*Laughter.*]

SUPPLY (POST OFFICE ESTIMATES).

Mr. S. WOODS (Essex, Walthamstow): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, if he can state the date when the Post Office Estimates will be taken?

Mr. HANBURY: These were the first Estimates taken last year, and other Estimates which had not opportunities for early discussion will no doubt come on before them. I do not think they can be discussed before Easter.

NAZIM PASHA (APPOINTMENT).

Mr. MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Sir Philip Currie, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, protested against the appointment of Nazim Pasha, the Police Minister, at the time of the Constantinople massacres, to the Governor Generalship of the province of Beyrout; and, whether any precautions have been taken for the security of the lives and property of the Christian population of the province over which Nazim Pasha has been appointed Governor General. This is the third time of asking? [*Laughter.*]

*MR. CURZON: Yes, Sir, but the hon. Gentleman appears to have forgotten that I have twice previously answered the Question. [*Laughter.*] Her Majesty's Ambassador did not think that there were sufficient grounds for protesting against the appointment, nor has he thought it necessary to call for special precautions in regard to the province of Beyrout, beyond those demanded for other parts of Asiatic Turkey.

MR. MACNEILL: Is not the right hon. Gentleman aware that it has been publicly stated, and not controverted, that Sir Philip Currie did protest, and stongly?

*MR. CURZON: The British Ambassador must really be a better judge as to whether he has protested than the hon. Gentleman.

PAYOS OFFICIALS.

MR. MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, notwithstanding the most urgent representations of Sir Philip Currie, and the dispatch of a British war vessel, the officials at Payos, in the Adana district, have not been changed; and whether the wife of the Governor who presided over the recent massacres has received a decoration from the Sultan?

*MR. CURZON: The Vali of Adana has been dismissed from his post. We have heard nothing about the wife of the Governor. [*Laughter.*]

AGRICULTURAL RATING ACT.

*MR. D. MACALEESE (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he has received a copy of a resolution passed by the Clogher Board of Guardians, at their meeting held on the 20th instant, calling for the application to Ireland of the provisions of the Agricultural Rating Act, 1896; and can he state when he will be prepared to introduce a Bill with that object?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The reply to this Question is covered by my answer to a previous Question on the same subject.

MR. CARSON: Is there not the same necessity for relieving agriculture in Ireland as in England?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I can hardly give an answer to that Question.

SALISBURY PLAIN (MILITARY MANŒUVRES).

GENERAL RUSSELL (Cheltenham): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether Military manœuvres will be held on Salisbury Plain this year; and, if not, whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce any kind of Manœuvre Bill this Session, so as to give the troops the benefit of those exercises which they did not have last year, and which it is universally acknowledged are essential to secure their efficiency?

MR. BRODRICK: We have made provision in this year's Estimates for tactical exercises, and we intend that they shall take place; but the Military Works Bill is not yet law, and until it passes we cannot say precisely what our position may be in regard to the land on Salisbury Plain. Lord Lansdowne is most desirous of passing a Manœuvres Bill, but the question of Parliamentary time rests with the First Lord of the Treasury.

VILAYET OF VAN.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government have information that five Kurdish villages have lately been destroyed in the Vilayet of Van by Armenian insurgents?

*MR. CURZON: We have received no such information.

SCOTLAND YARD (CAB DRIVERS).

CAPTAIN NORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether it has been brought to his notice that a Mr. Stewart, an officer of the Great Eastern Railway Company, and a Mr. Joseph Coward, a licensed cab-driver, visit the new Police Offices, New Scotland Yard, daily, touting for cabdrivers for a particular Cab Company; and, will he consider the advisability of preventing them using these Government buildings for this purpose?

SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: I have already informed the hon. Member that no touting for cabdrivers goes on at Scotland Yard. The persons referred to in the Question do attend at Scotland Yard, but only as other persons do, for the purpose of bringing men to be examined who have applied for employment in the Companies they represent.

CUBA (MURDER OF BRITISH SUBJECT).

MR. J. GRETTON (Derbyshire, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has received any confirmation of the report that a British subject has been murdered in Cuba in his own house by Spanish soldiers; and, if so, what action Her Majesty's Government has taken, or proposes to take?

*MR. CURZON: Her Majesty's Government have received no information on the subject, but have telegraphed an inquiry to Her Majesty's Consul General at Havana.

SCIENCE AND ART EXAMINATIONS.

MR. R. ASCROFT (Oldham): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if he has received representations from the Oldham School Board representing the inconvenience and probable loss that will be sustained through the examinations of the Science and Art Department, fixed for the week ending the 26th June, clashing with the scholars' Jubilee holiday; whether there is still sufficient time to rearrange the dates for the examinations; and whether he will give the question his careful consideration?

SIR J. GORST: The Committee of Council are at present considering the matter, and are in communication with the Scotch Education Department.

FOOD PRODUCTS ADULTERATION.

MR. JEFFREYS: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether his attention has been called to the evidence given by the influential deputation from the Central and Associated Chambers of Agriculture and other representative bodies, received by the President of the Board of Agriculture on the 2nd instant, that a Bill to give effect to the recommendations of the Select Committee on Food Products Adulteration would receive general support from all quarters of this House; and whether, under these circumstances, the Government will introduce and press forward such a Measure in the present Session?

SIR JOHN LENG: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he is aware that in large cities like London, Manchester, Birmingham, and Glasgow, much objection is taken to a recommendation of the Committee on Food Products Adulteration directed against the free sale of a wholesome and nutritious article of food much used by the working classes; and whether, seeing that this recommendation was carried by a majority against the Chairman of the Committee, who has described it in the House as of a highly contentious character, and in view of the numerous measures promised in Her Majesty's gracious Speech, he will defer the introduction of another Bill which will be keenly contested both in and out of Parliament?

*MR. CHANNING: Before the right hon. Gentleman answers that question, may I ask whether he is aware that the deputation was attended by and had the warmest support of Members of this side of the House as well as on the other side?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): As my hon. Friend will see if he looks at the next Question on the Paper, (standing in the name of the hon. Member for Dundee) — which I may, perhaps, answer at the same time—the general support which he believes, and I hope rightly believes, would be given to any Measure of this kind on both sides of the House, is, at all events not universal. I cannot at this moment make any promise as to the introduction or passage of such a Bill, but I will consult with my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Agriculture as to whether in any case it might not be desirable to bring a Bill before the House and read it, at all events, for the first time, in order that the public may be able to judge of the character of the provisions which, in the opinion of the Board of Agriculture, it is desirable to introduce.

IRISH MEETING PROHIBITED (CO. MAYO).

Mr. DILLON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary for Ireland a Question, of which I have given him private notice—(1) whether a meeting announced to be held on Sunday last at Knox, Killassar, county Mayo, was prohibited by the police authorities; (2) whether the Killassar band and a number of people who were proceeding in the direction of the meeting were charged by the police, who broke the instruments of the band and dispersed the people; and (3) I also desire to ask the right hon. Gentleman on what grounds the meeting was interfered with?

*Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: It is the fact that a meeting announced to be held at Knox, Killassar, county Mayo, last Sunday was prohibited by the police authorities. But I do not think it is quite correct to say, as the hon. Gentleman says, that the Killassar band and a number of people who were proceeding in the direction of the meeting were charged by the police, who broke the instruments and dispersed the people. What occurred was this. A large crowd assembled accompanied by two bands. They were warned that the meeting was not allowed to be held, and, disregarding that warning, they were dispersed, and in the mélee the drums were smashed. [*Laughter.*] As regards the last part of the hon. Gentleman's question, the meeting was interfered with because it appeared from evidence on oath that its object was to advocate boycotting and intimidation. Therefore, the result of the meeting would have been a serious disturbance of the peace. [*Ministerial cheers.*]

Mr. DILLON: I wish to know on whose responsibility was the meeting interfered with? The right hon. Gentleman stated, in reply to my Question, that it was interfered with by the police authorities. But was the Castle consulted?

*Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: Oh, yes, Sir. It was by my orders. [*Ministerial cheers.*]

FINANCIAL RELATIONS (ENGLAND AND IRELAND).

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee) asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether a rumour which had reached him was true, that the Government intended to take Tuesday next for the continuation of the Debate on the Financial Relations question?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: Of course, I have no evidence that the Financial Relations Debate will last over Monday night. [*Nationalist cries of* "Oh."] But some weeks ago a Question was put to me by hon. Gentlemen opposite who are interested in the Debate, asking me whether, when I appointed a date for the Debate, I meant to restrict it to one day. I answered that I had no such intention, and, if therefore, hon. Gentlemen wish that the Debate should extend over one day, I, of course, will not attempt to put any obstacle in the way. If it should not conclude on Monday I will have no choice but to ask the House to permit the Debate to continue on Tuesday.

QUEEN'S JUBILEE PROCESSION.

Mr. HARRY MARKS (Tower Hamlets, St. George's) gave notice that to-morrow he would ask leave to introduce a Bill to enable magistrates to restrain the eviction of certain tenants in London until after the day of the Jubilee Procession. [*Laughter and cheers.*]

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

Mr. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington N.) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he would make his Budget statement before Easter?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: I am unable to answer the Question.

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE (EXEMPTION FROM THE STANDING ORDER).

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY moved, "That the proceedings on the Voluntary Schools Bill, if under discussion at Twelve o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order Sittings of the House."

The House divided:—Ayes, 269; Noes, 114.—(Division List, No. 146.)

MOTION.

PATENT OFFICE EXTENSION.

Bill for the Acquisition of Land for the extension of the Patent Office, and for purposes connected therewith, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Akers-Douglas and Mr. Hanbury; presented, and Read the First time; to be Read a Second time upon Monday next, and to be printed.—[Bill 175.]

ROYAL NATIONAL LIFEBOAT INSTITUTION.

The Select Committee to inquire into the Administration of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution was nominated of,—Mr. Cawley, Sir John Colomb, Mr. Crombie, Mr. Vaughan-Davies, Mr. Darling, Mr. Johnson-Ferguson, Mr. Firbank, Sir R. Penrose FitzGerald, Mr. Galloway, Mr. Evan Llewellyn, Sir Lewis McIver, Mr. James O'Connor, Mr. Schwann, Mr. W. F. D. Smith, and Lord Stanley.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That three be the quorum.—*(Mr. Anstruther.)*

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS BILL.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.) moved "That this Bill be now Read a Third time."

*MR. H. H. ASQUITH (Fife, E.), who was received with Opposition cheers, on rising to move to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months," said: It had been the intention of my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition himself to move the Amendment which I am about to submit to the House. I am sure I am only giving utterance to the universal sentiment, which no one has reason for feeling more acutely than myself, when I say that the cause of his involuntary absence is one that excites sympathy and regret from Gentlemen in every quarter. [*Cheers.*] We have now reached the last stage in the progress of a Measure which, as I believe, is destined to be a landmark in the history of the House of Commons. ["Hear, hear!"] Alike in its inception and its conduct, in the manner in which it was originally drawn and in the methods by which it has been presented and recommended to the House, it creates a grave innovation upon our habitual practice—["hear, hear!"]—an innovation which, if it were allowed to become a precedent, would fundamentally alter—and, in our judgment, alter for the worse—the conditions under which the legislative work of Parliament has hitherto been uniformly carried on. [*Cheers.*] No one can be surprised that Her Majesty's Government, taught by the disastrous and humiliating experience of last year—[*cheers*]—should have found themselves under a strong temptation to reduce their present proposals to within the compass of the greatest simplicity, and thereby to curtail the area of relevant discussion, and, as far as lay in their power, to shorten the line of possible attack. That is a natural, and, I do not hesitate to acknowledge, a perfectly legitimate object. The best method of attaining it appears to me to have been strangely misconceived by the authors of the present Bill. They seem to have supposed that if you want to make a thing simple all you have to do is to make it short, and that it is possible for the Government to conceal from the House of Commons the real character of a series of complex and highly contentious proposals by getting the draughtsman to huddle them together, scantily clad in vague and indefinite language, within the four corners of a single clause. I have described these proposals as complex and contentious, but I will add that they are also for the most part entirely novel. In the first clause there are to be found at least three principles—I believe a minute scrutiny might easily add to the number—which, in their character, are new, and for which there is no precedent in any previous legislation or attempted legislation in reference to the subject. In the first place, that clause selects for preferential, and, as far as this Bill is concerned, for exclusive treatment, a particular class of schools, the sectarian as distinguished from the Board Schools of the country, while neither on the face of the Bill, nor from the lips of any responsible Minister, have we had any assurance that to the Board Schools there is going to be meted out equality of treatment. And even now, when we are asked to Read the Bill a Third time, we are entirely without a glimmer of knowledge or conjecture as to what the proposals for the Board Schools are going to be. In the second place, that clause computes the adequate amount of the sum that is to be granted on the basis of the whole number of children in attendance in all the sectarian schools of the country, while the distribution of the dole is to be restricted to schools which are described as necessitous. And here, again, I say that, up to this moment, neither in the Bill itself, nor in the declarations of those responsible for it, have we an inkling of what is going to be the criterion applied by the Education Department in order to determine whether one school is or is not necessitous as compared with another. And, thirdly, and lastly, in the first clause of this Bill you for the first time summon into existence a number of associations, which are to be recruited and kept on foot by an indirect but most effective form of compulsion—associations of whose functions and powers I shall have something to say later on, but as to which I repeat the complaint I have already made with reference to the two other heads of the clause, that, as far as the Bill is concerned, we are left absolutely in the dark as to what is to be their composition, and what is to be the area of their operations. I say of those three principles, all of which are comprehended in a single clause, that there is not one of them which, so far as my knowledge goes, has ever been put forward, suggested, or even dreamt of until six months ago by any responsible statesman in this country. There is not one of them which finds any recognition or even countenance in the elaborate and deliberate scheme which was submitted to Parliament last year by the Government themselves. Each one of them in turn constitutes an entirely new departure in our system of national education. And yet we are told—we have been told before, and, I suppose, we shall be told again to-night, by way of reproach to us on this side of the House, for endeavouring to elucidate the effect and character of these novel proposals, and by way of defence or excuse of those who, on the other side, made in the course of the Committee unexampled resort to the machinery which our rules supply for the curtailment of discussion—we are told that all this Bill consists of is to be found within the compass of a single clause. I assert without fear of contradiction, that, if ordinary Parliamentary precedents had been followed, the first clause of this Bill would have been expanded—I understate the case when I say—into at least five or six. Does any hon. Gentleman dispute that proposition? If he does, let me invite him to consider what are the topics that are dealt with in this clause. First of all, you assert the principle that, as far as this Bill is concerned, Voluntary and not Board Schools are to be aided. Then you go on to provide for the amount of the aggregate grant. You proceed to make the Education Department the primary authority for its distribution. You restrict the recipients of the grant to those schools which are called necessitous. You introduce in a cursory and shadowy fashion references to the conditions under which the grant is to be claimed and received, by suggesting the condition of efficiency, and in very vague terms the condition of the maintenance of voluntary subscriptions. You then go on to create associations, to settle their functions relatively on the one side to the Department, and on the other to their constituent units. You provide for the distribution of the fund among the schools represented by the associations, and for discrimination between town and country schools. You give to the associations the power of making schemes and subjecting those schemes to the Education Department. You confer on the Education Department the power of excluding a school which unreasonably refuses to belong to the association; and you finally deal with the question of the audit of school accounts. All those proposals, involving and covering as they do almost the whole area of the most controversial side of our educational system, are, every one of them, contained within the compass of a single clause. [*Opposition cheers.*] Now, if I refer to Parliamentary precedent, as we have been told that we have spent, what is perfectly true, some nine Parliamentary days in the discussion of that clause—if I refer to precedent, let me recall to the recollection of many hon. Gentlemen what happened during the last Parliament in the case of a Bill which was not supposed to be a contentious Bill, a Bill the principle of which was welcomed, or alleged to be welcomed, with equal confidence and satisfaction by both sides—I mean the Parish Councils Bill. In the case of the Parish Councils Bill I remember well that we spent no fewer than seven Parliamentary nights—in what? In discussing the question of the election and constitution of boards of guardians — [*Opposition cheers*]—and the right hon. Gentleman now Leader of the House, so far from being ashamed of or resenting that consumption of Parliamentary time, took the opportunity, in a letter published in the newspapers, to glory in the amount and length of that discussion, saying that in a matter of that kind—as uncontentious, as non-controversial, as it is almost possible to conceive a Parliamentary topic being—the Opposition had done and intended to continue to do their duty under the Constitution of this country. Seven days we spent on that topic; five days more upon another topic, certainly not so contentious as any one of the sub-sections of the first clause of this Bill—namely, the manner in which parochial charities were to be dealt with in relation to the Parish Councils. It certainly does not lie in the mouths of those who conducted opposition on that scale and in that spirit, to a non-controversial Measure, to cast any reproach in our teeth for the length of time we have occupied in the elucidation of this complex and highly contentious scheme. To what points have our efforts been directed? They have been two. First of all, to the elucidation of the new proposals which for the first time have been submitted to Parliament in this clause, and in the second place to the introduction of limitations and safeguards, for every one of which, I believe, I do not think I am exaggerating when I say we have been able to invoke the authority either of responsible Ministers of the Government themselves or of the foremost champions and advocates of the denominational schools. By way of making good that proposition let me just remind the House of three or four points which have been urged, and upon which our efforts have been concentrated. First and foremost there was the question which was raised upon an Instruction before we went into Committee—the attempt to procure the power, at any rate in Committee, of recognising in this Bill the principle that schools, largely, mainly, and, if this Bill be passed, in many cases exclusively, supported out of public funds, should have upon their boards of management some representation either of the parents or of the local authority. That was a very modest proposal. There was no suggestion made on the part of those who are responsible for it that there should be introduced into the management of those schools a preponderating element of representation such as would alter the character or imperil the existence of the schools as denominational and sectarian schools. We were perfectly content to make a much milder proposal—namely, that you should have one or more persons upon the board of management, by whose attendance, vigilance, and criticism, the people of the locality could be made assured that the schools were really being appropriated to the purpose for which Parliament intended, that the money which Parliament granted was being expended exclusively upon educational objects, and that no kind of sectarian practice was being infused into their management and character as public institutions. That Instruction, after being debated during part of an evening, was closured by the right hon. Gentleman, and we were not allowed, we were shut out from the very beginning from making any proposal, however moderate and reasonable, for the introduction of the representative element into the schools. Then we came to another point—namely, the question of securing that the large additional sum of money to be granted by this Bill should be applied exclusively in the improvement of education. For that purpose it was necessary, as we conceived—and, of course, I need not quote the authority of Archbishops, Bishops, and responsible Ministers to the proposition—that some level of voluntary subscriptions should be maintained in order to secure that there was at any rate an approximate correspondence between local effort and zeal on the one side and the Imperial subvention and support on the other, and that the money granted should be spent in improving the salaries of the teachers, the equipment of the school, and its general efficiency for educational purposes. On the question of subscriptions we were able to cite the highest authority in the Church and the Conservative Party. On the question of efficiency we were able to appeal to the precedent of the Bill of last year, and the Amendment in which we sought to embody our proposal was copied *verbatim et literatim* from the Bill Her Majesty's Government themselves introduced. The representations which we made on both these points and the efforts we directed to secure that this large additional grant of public money should be appropriated to the purpose for which Parliament had intended were totally unavailing and futile. Let me remind the House of another point on which a short amount of time was spent, and which is of vital moment to the maintenance of the efficiency of our educational system—I mean the position of the teachers. [*Opposition cheers.*] It is a matter which is notorious, and which I will venture to say is even scandalous—[*cheers*]—that in a very considerable proportion of those so-called Voluntary Schools, not only can no person attain to the position of teacher, or assistant teacher, or even pupil teacher, who does not belong to the church in whose interest the school is carried on; but even when they have passed that test the teacher is required, as a condition of accepting and holding office, to perform extraneous duties in connection with the church which, I do not hesitate to say, that no teacher of self-respect or of the highest educational efficiency would condescend to perform. We have endeavoured to secure, when you are so largely increasing the public subvention of those schools, not that the teacher should not belong to the religious denomination of the school, but that no teacher who hereafter should be appointed in charge of a school of this kind should be required, as a condition of his tenure of office, to undertake those extraneous and irrelevant duties. There again we were met with negation by the Government, and our Amendment was rejected. I have instanced these out of a large number of cases to show that, as regards matters which are strictly non-controversial —matters in the case of every one of which the Amendment proposed from this side of the House might have been incorporated in the Bill consistently with its fundamental principles and without impairing the grant to be made—we have been met with an absolute *non possumus* on the part of Her Majesty's Government. Efforts made, as I venture to say, not only conscientiously, not in a partisan spirit, to secure an increased level of efficiency for our educational system, have been treated as though they were obstructive and gratuitous interruptions in the passing through of this grant. I now come to another aspect of the case, in which I believe the conduct of this Bill to be entirely without precedent. I pause here to say that, as regards all these practical and administrative matters, we have not received throughout the discussions in Committee a ray of light or a glimmer of guidance from the responsible head of the Education Department. [*Opposition cheers.*] That, again, is a unique feature in the history of this memorable Bill. [*Opposition cheers.*] Night after night the Vice President has sat on that Bench, or somewhere else, a silent and detached spectator of the process, I will not say of moulding, for it would be irony to speak of Committee on this Bill as a formative process—but, at any rate, of debating and defending proposals on the passing of which the future conduct of his Department must largely depend. In the early stages the spectacle excited the faint but constantly diminishing amusement which is aroused by the frequent repetition of an indifferent practical joke. [*Laughter.*] But I venture to say that before the end of the Committee it assumed the dimensions of a grave Parliamentary scandal. [*Cheers.*] I do not know, I do not care, whether the right hon. Gentleman's silence was self-imposed or whether it was imposed by others, whether it was the result of diffidence or discipline. [*Laughter.*] Every man is, and must be, in the last resort the judge of what is due to his own self-respect and his own feelings; but this is not a personal question with reference to the prestige or self-respect of an individual. [*Cheers.*] It is a matter in which the House of Commons is concerned. [*Cheers.*] Here we have a Minister, the only Minister whom we can make responsible for the expenditure of large sums of public money, or the conduct of a great Department in the State; and in reference to that Department a Bill is before us, on the back of which the name of that Minister is printed. It is a Bill which largely increases the sums which pass through his hands and which greatly enlarges the responsibility and action of his Department; and I do not care whether the right hon. Gentleman acted from a spontaneous impulse or in deference to the orders of others, but in these circumstances that the head of that Department should persistently abstain from enlightening and informing the House of Commons is to assume an attitude of gross disrespect to this House. [*Cheers.*] As to the associations which will be formed under the first clause of the Bill, I am bound to admit, in reference to that matter, that the right hon. Gentleman has, to some extent, broken through the rule of taciturnity to which he has otherwise uniformly submitted himself. On the Second Reading of the Bill he gave us a good deal of interesting light as to what he, at any rate, conceived that the associations might be and might do. He was careful, however, to remind us that anything he said was not to be taken as in any way binding the First Lord of the Treasury or the Government, but he was merely to be regarded as the mouthpiece of that practical body of men the Committee of Council. I observe that the right hon. Gentleman, since the Committee stage was closed, in a different atmosphere from this, in the seclusion of some Cambridgeshire hamlet—[*laughter*]—and, as far as I can judge, in the company of a skilful reporter—[*laughter*]—has enlarged still further on the subject of these associations. Here, again, I call attention to the right hon. Gentleman's language. I have some difficulty in dealing with the matter, because I observe that he said, "He seldom got the chance of speaking in his own individual capacity." [*Laughter.*] We can certainly bear witness that he rarely gets a chance of speaking in his Ministerial capacity—[*laughter*]—so that in what capacity the right hon. Gentleman is allowed to speak, who it is that allows him, at what time, in what place, and on what subjects, adds another to the rapidly growing mysteries which enshroud the operations of that obscure body the Committee of Council. [*Laughter.*] Now, the right hon. Gentleman did tell us some things in his individual capacity about these associations. We have had very great difficulty in understanding—I certainly have, because I have read his speech—how the associations were to get into being at all. I believe that is a difficulty which is shared by hon. Members opposite. We now know from the right hon. Gentleman that they are to spring up with the spontaneity of mushrooms. [*Laughter.*] These associations are to grow up of themselves;

> "they are not to be founded by the Government, but they are to be the spontaneous growth of the will of the people. [*Laughter and Ministerial cheers.*] I think that is a very good thing. I think something that grows up of itself is generally very much more stable, very much more likely to be suitable than anything which a Department in London can frame for the people."

[*Cheers.*] The associations, then, are to be spontaneous in their up-growth; that is an important and useful revelation. I remember very well how, in the early stages of our discussions in Committee, the noble Lord the Member for Rochester, who speaks with unrivalled authority as the mouthpiece of the supporters of the denominational system, told us very frankly that, if he were a manager of a denominational school, and if he were asked to join one of the associations, he should not do anything of the kind. He said that his conscience would not allow him to do it. Why? Because he was the trustee of the particular school which he represented, and as a trustee he conceived that he would be guilty of a breach of trust if he were to hand over any of the money out of the taxes which Parliament had granted for the benefit of that school to any other school. These "spontaneous" associations are to be of such a character that, in the judgment of the noble Lord, no one will voluntarily join them! We come to another point about the associations. What is to be their constitution? The Bill throws no light on the subject; and here we are obliged to form our judgment by a series of negations. We endeavoured when the Bill was in Committee by a series of Amendments to get on the face of the Bill some positive safeguards as to the constituency by which these associations should be elected, and as to the class of persons who should sit on them.

pain of fine or imprisonment, he is compelled to send his children to that school. The school is a school the buildings of which may have been added to, and the maintenance of which has been very largely provided out of public funds. We hear a great deal about what are called Voluntary Schools, but it seems to be forgotten that upon these so-called Voluntary Schools, within the last 50 years, in the acquisition of sites, in building the school, in its equipment, and in its maintenance, no less a sum than 50 millions sterling of the taxpayers' money has been spent. [*Opposition cheers.*] After the passing of this Bill I do not hesitate to say that in a large majority of cases, not 9d., not 10d., but 11d., or even 12d. in every shilling will be found out of the taxpayers' money. In the management of that school the Nonconformist parent will have no representation, direct or indirect, either through his own chosen representative or through some nominee of the district authority. And then, the teacher of the school will not only belong to a religious denomination which is not his own, but in a large number of cases he will be a person who is an active and, I might almost say, a menial officer of the Church to which he belongs. If the child of that parent is a clever child he will find the teaching profession, the avenue to which is through the pupil teachers, absolutely shut—[*cheers*]—unless he is prepared to forswear the faith of his fathers. He will find that that school—bad enough as are its local conditions from the point of view of freedom and justice—upon pain of losing the additional sum which is to be granted out of the public funds, will be compelled to join the association of schools, probably belonging to the same denomination as itself, and that upon the governing body of that association he and those who think like him, the parents of the children for whose sake, after all, these schools exist, are absolutely shut out from any share of representation or control. ["Hear, hear!"] I ask any fair-minded supporter of this Bill to place himself in imagination and sympathy in the position of a parent I have described and ask himself the question whether such a Bill as this ought to be acquiesced in as being just and politic, or even as an instalment of a settlement, by those parents. I have only one word more to say, and that is with reference to the conduct of the Bill through this House. ["Hear, hear!"] I desire to show that it is a Measure absolutely as destitute of constitutional authority as any ever passed by the House of Commons. From first to last not a single change has been made, not a word, a syllable, or a comma, has been altered. ["Hear, hear!"] Yes, there are some Members opposite who apparently glory in that. ["Hear, hear!"] If no change has been made in the Bill it must be due to one or other of two causes. It may be because Her Majesty's Government look upon it as so perfect, not only in its outlines and framework, but in its most minute and detailed provisions, when it proceeded from the hands of the draughtsman, that not one of the Amendments, for some of which we had the authority of the supporters of Voluntary Schools themselves, has been accepted. As to this question of "verbal inspiration," I will quote the right hon. Gentleman himself, who said, with regard to another Bill, that he had heard of verbal inspiration in another direction, but that he had never heard of it in relation to a long and complicated and controversial Measure. What are the claims of this Voluntary Schools Bill as compared with every other Measure which every other Government since the beginning of time has submitted to the House? Is the claim of verbal inspiration going to be set up? I do not think he will submit so preposterous a claim as that. What is the alternative? It is that this Bill was introduced, and has been conducted upon a preconceived resolution that no change—[*loud Opposition cheers*]—however consistent with the principle of the Bill, however clearly demanded by considerations of justice and of policy, that no change of any sort or kind should be introduced in its structure. [*Cheers.*] If that was his object he has succeeded. What has he gained? He has gained apparently a certain amount of sympathy from one or two hon. Gentlemen opposite. He has gained undoubtedly a good deal of superfluous and rather damaging applause from some of the more sycophantic organs of opinion outside, who congratulate him on his achievement—organs which it is only justice to him to say no man in this House more completely ignores or more heartily despises. [*Cheers and laughter.*] One more solid and substantial claim which may be put down to the credit of his policy is that he has actually saved, by the omission of the Report stage, two or three days of Parliamentary time. [*Cries of* "Weeks!"] We had sat in Committee say a week, or, if you please, ten days, and put your Report stage as long as you like. Yes, but what is the price which you pay for this slender and evanescent success? [*Cheers.*] No one can say the Bill was so pressing as to render it necessary to be passed before a certain fixed day. The price you have paid for this illusory advantage is this—that during the conduct of the Bill the House of Commons has ceased, in any real sense of the term, to be a deliberative Assembly. [*Cheers.*] It has ceased to be an Assembly in which the minority has had constitutional rights as well as constitutional duties. It has ceased to be an Assembly such as it has always hitherto been, in which room has been given for the free play of argument, in which, at least, upon matters of detail, concessions have been made to reasonable scruples, and even to objections, and in which the principle of compromise has been admitted upon points of subordinate importance and of doubtful validity. Any Minister who has a majority large enough and docile enough can any day repeat the right hon. Gentleman's tactics. He can do what the right hon. Gentleman has for the time being done, he can reduce the House of Commons to the level of an automatic machine for registering a foregone conclusion. The worst of an innovation of this kind is that it is apt to become a precedent. Once done by a Government with a majority behind it, as our experience of the closure has shown during the last ten years, it is almost certain to be repeated by any Minister representing a Government equally eager for the carrying into effect of legislation on which its heart is set. Each succeeding Government comes under an almost irresistible temptation and under almost an inevitable necessity to resort to the same means. I earnestly trust that the temptation will be resisted, but if the experiment be repeated, if it should become a practice, the right hon. Gentleman will be responsible. If it should become the normal, or, at least, not an abnormal part of our procedure, the result will be that, Debate in this House being carried on under the overshadowing consciousness of its ultimate futility, the individual Member will lose self-respect and the Opposition all sense of responsibility. That course of procedure once initiated, depend upon it that, instead of legislation being regarded as hitherto it has been regarded by the country, however strongly it may have been opposed at the time in principle, as the common property of both Parties, in the formation and moulding of which each Party in the country has some share of responsibility, legislation will come to be looked upon as a Party triumph won through the brute strength of an overwhelming and transient majority. The result will be that, so far from legislation of one Parliament being regarded as the starting point for the next, each Parliament in turn will be engaged in revising or reversing the proceedings of its predecessor. [*Opposition cheers.*] I ask the House not to give a Third Reading to this Bill. I say it starts from an invidious and unfounded discrimination between the needs and claims of the different classes of schools. It lets loose large sums of public money to be scrambled for by clerical managers, without any regulating principle—["Oh, oh!"]—and without any effective security, either for local or Parliamentary control. [*Cheers.*] It provides no safeguard for the appropriation of the doles to the improvement of education, for bettering the status of the teachers, or for redressing or even mitigating the injustice suffered by the Nonconformist parents. It has been initiated and conducted through this House by methods and in a spirit which are wholly alien to our hitherto unvaried practice. It is an unjust and unconstitutional Measure. It will go forth to the people of this country, not as a settlement, but as a provocation, and upon every ground, both of equity and policy, I ask the House to reject it. [*Loud cheers.*]

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir ROBERT FINLAY, Inverness Burghs), who was received with Ministerial cheers, said the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Asquith) had offered a very stringent criticism, both upon the framework of this Bill and the conduct of it in the House. He had hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would have lifted the

House out of the atmosphere of detail, in which they had spent the last three weeks, and would have indicated in some way or other the alternative policy he and his friends would have presented to the House. [*Ironical Opposition cheers.*] He thought the House had some right to expect that his right hon. Friend should have told them how he proposed to carry out that ardent desire which, he said, last year animated himself and his friends to do something to help Voluntary Schools, if, as he added, it could be done on proper conditions. [*Ministerial cheers.*] Certainly those conditions seemed to have had a great effect on the mind of his right hon. Friend, if he might judge from the entirely negative attitude he had now assumed in regard to helping Voluntary Schools. ["Hear, hear!"] His right hon. Friend had attacked root and branch the educational settlement of 1870. [*Ministerial cheers.*] Of that settlement the maintenance of Voluntary Schools was an essential part. [*Ministerial cheers.*] It was never proposed that Board Schools should be established for the purpose of entirely displacing Voluntary Schools, and providing a universal system of Board Schools all over the country. If Voluntary Schools were an essential part of that educational settlement, he thought the House had a right to be told what was to be done, not merely for the purpose of maintaining them in existence, but of maintaining them at such a standard of efficiency as would give the parents that education they had a right to expect for their children. ["Hear, hear!"] The right hon. Gentleman asked what would be the condition of the Nonconformist parent in 8,000 parishes under this Bill. If this Bill did anything it rather alleviated the condition of such a parent. There was not one hardship imposed by the Bill upon the Nonconformist parent. If any hardship existed, it existed under the Act of 1870. [*Ministerial cheers.*] He thought his right hon. Friend and his coadjutors very much overlooked the fact that the settlement of 1870 and the effect it had had in the country, was attended, not only with hardship to Nonconformists, but also to Churchmen. There were two sides to the account. [*Ministerial cheers.*] This Bill was an endeavour to improve the efficiency of Voluntary Schools, and in that way it did something for the Nonconformist parent who had to send his boy to a Church school. ["Hear, hear!"] He wished he could say that the State had been perfectly neutral in the settlement of 1870 as between Voluntary and Board Schools. As a matter of fact the State was not neutral, because the Board Schools had been given the unlimited fund of the rates to draw upon. [*Ministerial cheers.*] The State endowed the one class of schools, and did not endow the other class to anything like the same extent; yet it was stated in express terms in the settlement of 1870 that the Board Schools were merely to be supplementary to the Voluntary Schools, which it was the object of the Legislature to maintain and keep in an efficient condition. They had been told that the Scotch system was an admirable one, and that it ought to be introduced into England; but it must be remembered that in Scotland the School Boards had full liberty to choose what religious education should be given in their schools. Did right hon. Gentlemen opposite propose to take from Scotland the system of universal Board Schools, while taking away from that principle what rendered it tolerable? [*Ministerial cheers.*] He did not deny that Nonconformist grievances existed, and no one could have listened to the admirable speech of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Merionethshire without feeling that there was a case of hardship with regard to many Nonconformist parents, particularly in Wales; but surely Churchmen also had their rights, and it would be a piece of outrageous tyranny to say,

> "We are going to impose compulsorily on the whole country a system of School Boards, and at the same time we are not going to extend to those Boards the freedom as regards religious teaching which School Boards in Scotland enjoy."

If the House were brought face to face with that problem it would be found that the keenest opposition to giving such a freedom of choice in regard to religious teaching would come from hon. Gentlemen opposite. [*Ministerial cheers.*] A difficulty with which there had been no attempt to grapple was the enormous increase there would be in the rate if Voluntary Schools were extinguished. Could the Government, in face of the fact that a Commission had been appointed to inquire into the incidence of taxation and the Measures necessary for its amendment, propose a gigantic extension of the burden thrown, not on the whole country at large, not upon the general taxpayer, but upon the ratepayer, without being justly taunted with the grossest possible inconsistency? [*Ministerial cheers.*] The Government had been taunted with not helping Board Schools, and it was necessary to repeat that the number of necessitous Voluntary Schools was vastly greater than the number of necessitous Board Schools. In the district of London, in the metropolitan area, there was not a single necessitous Board School, because every Board School had the whole school rate of the metropolis to draw upon. ["Hear, hear!"] On the other hand, there were a great many necessitous Voluntary Schools in London; and the problem of aiding Voluntary Schools was an educational one, while the aid to be given in necessitous School Board districts was a ratepayers' question. These two problems were distinct and were properly dealt with in two separate Bills. It should be borne in mind that this was a Bill for the purpose of increasing the efficiency of Voluntary Schools, and that Board Schools, as a rule, did not need any pecuniary aid in order to bring them up to a high standard of efficiency. If Board Schools were more efficient than Voluntary Schools, as hon. Members opposite averred, it was due to their command of the purse. ["Hear, hear!"] In Board Schools the average expenditure was £2 10s. per scholar, while in Voluntary Schools it was only £1 18s. The Board Schools, having more money at their disposal, were able to pass more pupils in the higher standards, and so to earn a larger amount of Government grant. Board Schools also profited more by the fee grant than Voluntary Schools did. In these circumstances, surely it was reasonable for the Government to introduce this Bill first, reserving for subsequent consideration the problem of assisting necessitous Board Schools. The right hon. Gentleman found fault with the Bill because, he said, that an aggregate advance to all Voluntary Schools of 5s. was to be given, while necessitous schools only were to be relieved. He defied the right hon. Gentleman to suggest any better principle of computing the amount of the grant than that contained in the Bill, for the number of children in Voluntary Schools fluctuated from year to year, and it was impossible to say that a grant fixed this year would be adequate next year or the year after that. The Government did not propose that this money should be paid to all schools indiscriminately, for some wanted more than 5s., others less, and others nothing at all. The right hon. Gentleman asked why the Government had not defined the expression "necessitous schools." The reason was that it was extremely difficult to draw up a comprehensive definition which would meet every case which would arise in course of time. All the ingenuity of the Opposition, he might observe, had failed to present to the House any acceptable definition. The Education Department, dealing with each case on its merits, would have no difficulty in determining whether or not a school was reasonably in want of funds for the purpose of maintaining its efficiency. Of course, if school managers endeavoured to create a condition of necessity with a view to obtaining a grant, they might be justly told that they stood on the same footing as if they had had the money and had wasted it. Then the right hon. Gentleman said that the associations were to be formed by a compulsion which, though indirect, would be perfectly efficacious. That compelled him to repeat that if schools formed an association, it would be their own voluntary act, and that until such an association had been formed in a district, with the approval of the Education Department, no school could be penalised for not coming in. But when the schools in a district had shown their sense of the necessities of the situation by forming an association, surely it was reasonable and right to say that if a school stood out without reason it might be deprived of the grant which it would otherwise get. It was only when an association had been formed, and had been recognised by the Department, that a school could be put under certain disabilities if it declined without adequate reason to join in the arrangement approved by the common sense of the district. ["Hear, hear!"] Passing to the subject of the time that had been occupied in debating this Measure, the right hon. Gentleman opposite declared that there had been no waste of time. Well, as far as he knew, the Government had never complained of the amount of time devoted to the Measure. [*Opposition cries of* "Oh!"] Certainly they had prevented it from becoming unreasonable—[*laughter*]—but if they had erred at all, they had erred on the side of mercy—[*Opposition cries of* "Oh!"]—towards Gentlemen whose eloquence had threatened to submerge the Bill in its flood. He thought that if the Government had not judiciously intervened from time to time there would have been a very unreasonable amount of discussion. As it was, the Bill had certainly been adequately debated. Another right hon. Gentleman's proposition was that the great principle of local control ought to have been recognised in the Bill. That would be a reasonable proposition if the money dealt with was to be provided by localities; but surely, as the money was to come from the Exchequer, the control ought to be that of the central Department. He could see nothing plausible in the contention that ratepayers who did not contribute the money should be entitled to elect the governing bodies. ["Hear, hear."] The maintenance of subscriptions, to which the right hon. Gentleman had alluded, was a matter for which the Government were most anxious to provide. It would, however, be impossible to frame any rigid provision on the subject which would not work the greatest injustice in the case of perfectly deserving schools. The subscriptions fluctuated very much from year to year, and in those circumstances the best thing to do was to provide generally that the Education Department should have due regard to the maintenance of subscriptions. The right hon. Gentleman's complaint that the Government had not repeated the definition of efficiency in the Bill of last year was effectually answered by the Vice-President of the Council when he pointed out that that definition was introduced last year because it was proposed to confide to a certain limited extent the work of supervision to certain local bodies who were new to the work. But, in the name of common sense, why should they, when confiding the work of supervision to the Education Department, which knew more about these matters than any other body in the country, introduce a long section saying efficiency consisted in the provision of good teaching, proper appliances, and other *etceteras* which go to make up a good school? It would have been a mere waste of time to introduce such a provision. However proper it might have been under the circumstances in the Bill of last year, it would have been entirely out of place in a Bill framed as this was. He had been struck in the course of the discussion with the extreme kindliness with which hon. Gentlemen opposite spoke of the Bill of last year. [*Laughter.*] But they killed it. [*Opposition cheers.*] Some seemed to deprecate the fact; others seemed to rejoice in it. But the Bill was dead anyhow, and now that it was fairly dead hon. Members opposite hardly ever referred to it except in terms of eulogy. [*Cheers and Opposition laughter.*] But hon. Members opposite had not succeeded in killing the present Bill. If they had done so, no doubt on a future occasion they would have spoken of it as kindly as they had of the Bill of last year. [*Laughter.*] Much had been said by the right hon. Gentleman about the associations of schools. He said that the managers of rich schools would not join an association which contained poor schools, because they might be sacrificing their share of the grant for the benefit of their poorer neighbours. But under this Bill no school would have an absolute right to the 5s. grant. There was no vested right on the part of any school to receive the grant under the Bill. If a school were a necessitous school that would be considered, and it would receive such adequate grant as the Education Department might think right with the advice of the association, if there were an association. In this matter the Government appealed to the public spirit of Churchmen and those interested in Voluntary Schools belonging to all denominations. If every meeting of those interested in Voluntary Schools were to be the sort of ignoble scramble which the Leader of the Opposition depicted, and the clerical managers (as he put it) of Voluntary Schools were to sit on the governing bodies of the associations only to scramble for the largest share of the grant, each fighting for his own hand, then he contended that the future of Voluntary Schools was a very dark one. [" Hear, hear ! "] But he thought they might look with some confidence to the public spirit and patriotism of those interested in the maintenance of religious education. They might believe that those interested in a particular school would not confine their view merely to the welfare of that particular school, but would feel that the system of voluntary education had a great opportunity, and would realise that, if the rich and poor would combine, if the rich schools would minister out of their abundance by sacrificing their share of the grant for the benefit of the poorer schools out of the 5s. per head all round, adequate provision might be made for bringing up Voluntary Schools to the high level of efficiency of the Board Schools. The right hon. Gentleman asked why the parents and teachers were not represented on the governing bodies of the associations? The practical difficulty with regard to the representation of parents, a fluctuating body, was never met by any practical suggestion in Committee. The right hon. Gentleman's answer to the First Lord of the Treasury, who said that the teachers would be placed in a somewhat difficult and invidious position if they sat on the governing body of associations which had to determine the allocation of the grant and matters affecting even their own salaries, was entirely inadequate. They would be in a somewhat false position, which, he was convinced, from the high feeling that distinguished the profession, they would not desire to occupy. The right hon. Gentleman asked, for the hundredth time, what would be the areas of the associations, and whether they were to consist of one denomination or of more than one. Speaking for himself, he should rejoice if several of the denominations were able to combine in the associations. It would be a most admirable thing if they recognised that, while they differed as to the particular mode of teaching they desired should be given to the children in their schools, they were agreed that there should be distinctly religious teaching. It had been said by the hon. Member for East Mayo that Roman Catholic schools were not likely to join such an association. But he himself understood that Catholic schools had already combined with Church of England and Nonconformist schools to raise money on behalf of schools which recognised the principle of religious education. [" Hear, hear ! "] He did not see why that should not take place under this Bill, but if it did not, and schools combined according to their denominations, surely everyone would recognise that it would have been simple madness to have inserted in the Bill any particular area to which these associations must conform. Local circumstances all over the country must vary almost infinitely. Seven competing schemes were put forward in Committee, and the work of the Government in resisting the Amendments on this subject was very much facilitated by the civil war that raged among their proposers. If those gentlemen could have been shut up to fight it out among themselves he fancied there would not have been much residuum. [*Laughter.*] From the mere fact that there were so many competing, inconsistent and conflicting proposals, it would have been perfect infatuation if the Government had said the areas should be counties, dioceses, sanitary districts, or poor law unions. The areas of the associations must, of course, be evolved according to local necessities, and he agreed with the Vice President of the Council that the associations would be a matter of local growth, and it would have been the greatest mistake if the Department had laid down rigid rules in advance as to what the areas should be. With regard to the associations, the right hon. Gentleman opposite said he had great difficulty in finding out what the associations had to do. He would suggest that, after the heat of the Debate was over, he should quietly read the sub-section which related to the functions of the associations. Nothing could be clearer. If an association were formed it had allotted to it a certain share of the aid grant, and that share had to be distributed by the Education Department after taking the advice of the association. If the association prepared no scheme which was approved by the Department, that Department had a free hand to distribute the grant according to the provisions of the Act itself.

There was the whole mystery, and if his right hon. Friend had devoted as much pains to understand this Bill as he had to find fault with it, he would have had no doubt on that point. Very severe strictures were passed upon the conduct of this Bill through Committee, and his right hon. Friend had said that this was a new departure in the annals of Parliament—that it meant that the House of Commons was to be reduced to impotence, and that nothing of the kind had ever been done before. He also read again the passage which the right hon. Member for Montrose had read, quoting the words spoken by the First Lord of the Treasury with reference to an Irish Measure. That Measure, however, was not of trivial importance, as his right hon. Friend seemed to think; it was a Measure of very considerable dimensions, and of very great importance. It was a Measure which had been sent to a Standing Committee, and it had never been debated in detail in that House. ["Hear, hear!"] As the passage had been read again he would again give the answer which was given at the time to the right hon. Member for Montrose. The answer was that this was a long and complicated Measure dealing with a matter of vast importance—namely, municipal government in Ireland—and that it had never been debated in that House at all. The present Measure, however, had been debated, and at very great length—["hear, hear!"]—at every stage—on its Introduction, on the Second Reading, and in Committee, the latter stage occupying, he thought, more than a full Parliamentary fortnight. It was said that it was a very monstrous thing that any Bill should go through that House without Amendment. Well, that depended entirely upon what the Amendments proposed were. [*Cheers and Opposition counter-cheers.*] He was very much struck with the fact that his right hon. Friend in his peroration, in which he was extremely eloquent on this point, confined himself entirely to generalities. He did not specify any particular Amendment which he thought the Government ought to have accepted, but said it was a monstrous thing that the Bill should have gone through without Amendment.

*MR. ASQUITH: I specified at least four Amendments. [*Opposition cheers.*]

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL said his right hon. Friend had not done so in making this charge. He had himself dealt *seriatim* with almost every particular point that his right hon. Friend had urged in the course of his speech, and he ventured to say that the Amendments on which he laid the greatest stress were, on the grounds he had submitted to the House, Amendments inconsistent with the Bill, and which could not have been accepted without in some respects impairing the Measure. [Mr. CARVELL WILLIAMS: "How about the audit?"] That was a case where, as was pointed out, the clause as it stood was perfectly efficacious. The hon. Member could not have been present when the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean pointed out that the proposal to insert "shall" for "may" was a proposal to which he attached not the slightest importance. With regard to the proposal for substituting a district auditor for the auditor to be named by the Department, the Government were able to vouch the authority of the right hon. Gentleman opposite the late Vice President of the Council; and, although the right hon. Gentleman endeavoured to deprive the Government of that strong city of refuge by saying he thought he had been mistaken, he himself must venture respectfully to differ from him. He thought the right hon. Gentleman was perfectly right in the course he took, and they were perfectly right in following it. Moreover, that Amendment was ultimately withdrawn. [*Cheers and laughter.*] His right hon. Friend denounced this Measure root and branch; he said it was bad in its design, bad in its framework, and that its conduct through the House was bad. [*Opposition cheers.*] His right hon. Friend and a certain number of Gentlemen on the other side might say that, but the Government appealed from them to the judgment of the country. [*Opposition cheers and Ministerial counter cheers.*] What was the policy of hon. Gentlemen opposite with regard to Voluntary Schools? [*Ministerial cheers.*] It was a policy of barren negation, for while they said they wanted to help Voluntary Schools they opposed and endeavoured to impede the passing of every Measure which proposed to do that. The Government appealed from the criticisms of hon. Gentlemen opposite to the people of this country—[*cheers and counter cheers*]—and he felt convinced that they would recognise that, although nobody could say that this Measure professed to be a final settlement of this great question—["hear, hear!"]—it was an honest endeavour to maintain in efficient working an essential part of the great settlement of 1870. [*Ministerial cheers.*]

MR. SAMUEL EVANS (Glamorgan, Mid) reminded the hon. and learned Gentleman (the Solicitor General) that there had already been an appeal to the people in certain parts of the country, but the Romford and Walthamstow elections seemed to have produced little effect upon his mind. The hon. and learned Member accused them of having no alternative plan, but it would not be right on the Third Reading of the Bill to produce or discuss any alternative plan. The question was whether this Measure ought to have the assent of the House on the Third Reading. The basis of the compromise of 1870 was that they would not destroy the Voluntary Schools as long as they continued to show that they wanted to help themselves. The hon. and learned Member seemed to have forgotten that the Act of 1870 said that they must have an equal sum of local contributions towards the maintenance of these schools or they would not have the Parliamentary grant. The first attack which was made upon that settlement was in 1876 by the Conservative Government of the day, when they proposed to give a grant up to the sum of 17s. 6d. per child without having any regard to voluntary subscriptions at all. The last attack, that which was made by the present Bill, would destroy altogether the basis of the compromise of 1870, which was that there should be local contributions, and local efforts made to maintain these schools. The Government had practically told the country that it did not matter whether there were to be contributions or not, in fact the Bill would render it unnecessary in many places that there should be voluntary contributions at all. There was, he knew, one phrase in the Bill which said that the Education Department should have due regard to voluntary subscriptions, but they were also told that the Education Department was an overburdened Department, and this phrase was merely a pious opinion and would have no effect in the country at all. The noble Lord the Member for Greenwich, who was one of the warmest supporters of this Measure had called voluntary contributions a species of blackmail. Was it likely that Churchmen like the noble Lord were going to have due regard to the levying of blackmail for the support of these schools? The hon. and learned Member had said that the hardships which existed now existed in 1870, but surely when they were making a large additional grant they had the right to ask that those hardships should not be aggravated. It rested with the Government to say what were necessitous schools, and yet they had not had a single definition of the term, nor had they had even a single illustration or case to elucidate the term. The hon. and learned Member said they had no right to ask for public control because the ratepayers themselves contributed no money, and the money came from the Exchequer. But where did the Exchequer get the money from? ["Hear, hear!"] Probably the reason why rate aid was not given by the Government was because when the taxes were in the shape of rates the people realised more keenly the burden. He ventured to think that the reason why the noble Lord and his Friends had not their claim for rate aid instead of State aid conceded, was because rate aid would have to be accompanied by public control; and it was idle for the hon. and learned Gentleman to tell the House that they were to give this £640,000 a year—a sum which might be increased indefinitely as years went on, and which at present represented a capital sum of over 15 millions sterling; and that there ought not to be public control because, forsooth, the money came from the Exchequer, and only indirectly from the taxpayer. The Bill was one which the House ought not to read a Third time. His objections to it were five-fold, and he might increase them if he liked to a much larger number. His first objection was that the motive and object of the Bill was sectarian and not educational. The hon. and learned Gentleman had the hardihood to say that the opponents of the Bill were nicknaming these Voluntary Schools when they called them sectarian schools. The schools were undeniably belonging to sects, and were, therefore, sectarian. Who had agitated for the Bill? Educationists had not demanded it, and did not approve of it. They should look in vain for any petition spontaneously signed by the parents in favour of the Bill. Indeed, parents generally, instead of asking that the Voluntary Schools should be perpetuated, desired Board Schools instead. The agitators for the Bill, in season and out of season, were the Church Party in the House, and Church functionaries outside the House. The Archbishop of Canterbury, representing the Church of England, and Cardinal Vaughan, representing the Romish Church, were the chief agitators for the Bill. No other denomination had asked for the Bill. The Members of the Wesleyan body in the House had absolutely condemned it. No one could believe that Cardinal Vaughan was in favour of the Bill, simply because it would promote education; he was really in favour of it because it was a sectarian Bill. The Archbishop of Canterbury, when he was an educationist, had condemned many of the principles which underlie the Measure; but now that he had ceased to be an educationist and had become a cleric, he was in favour of the Bill. The real object of the Bill was to buttress the Church of England and the Romish Church, and to facilitate proselytism in this country. [*Ministerial cries of* "No!" *and Opposition cheers.*] If that were not the object of the Bill why was not a provision inserted making it absolutely impossible for clerical managers of Voluntary Schools to compel pupil teachers to go to Church? The Church of England schools received from education grants in 1895 the immense sum of £2,785,522, and under the present Bill they would receive, on the average attendance of children in its schools, an additional sum of £463,655. Therefore the Church of England would receive for the purpose of distribution to the managers of its schools a sum of three and a quarter millions sterling every year, and was it unreasonable to ask that this large sum from the taxpayers' money should be accompanied by some Measure of local control and some security that the schools to which it went would be properly managed? The Bill was, in fact, a gigantic additional endowment of the Church of England, and in his humble judgment it was not less objectionable because it was given under the cloak and guise of education. It was not an endowment in any sense to promote the efficiency of the schools. It was an endowment of intolerance, inefficiency, and inequality, and as such the House should not assent to it. He held also that the Bill was objectionable because it provided denominational teaching at the expense of the State. He objected further to giving large sums of money, without State control, to irresponsible managers and bodies. The President of the Council had not been very active in the Debates inside the House; but outside the House the right hon. Gentleman had dealt very effectively with the question of the necessity for providing security that the money should go to increase the efficiency of the schools and not to relieve subscribers. In *The Nineteenth Century* of November last, the right hon. Gentleman wrote:—

> "Some plan will have to be devised to secure that the aid will go to the school and not to the subscribers; otherwise it will be swallowed up by the latter, and the former will be no better off than before."

Where was the plan that had been devised to secure that the aid should go to the school and not to the subscribers? It was because there was an absence of any scheme of the kind that he objected to the Bill. In the same article the right hon. Gentleman, dealing with the question of public control, wrote:—

> "The managers of the Voluntary Schools must make up their minds to accept along with increased grants of public money increased public control."

He commended that declaration to the hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor General, who had declared that they were not entitled to demand public control. The right hon. Gentleman then went on to use those extraordinary words—extraordinary, having regard to his action in the House—

> "if aid come from the State, Parliament is sure to impose conditions, with the view of securing the application of the special grant to increasing the efficiency of the schools."

That was what they had been asking for all through the Debates in Committee, and the right hon. Gentleman, by reason of his position as a Member of the Government, had to vote against those conditions which he himself had declared should be imposed. He further objected to the Bill because it entrusted the ultimate destination of the money to those ecclesiastical bodies called associations, not yet formed, without any schemes for their constitution. It had been said that parents had an inalienable right to see that their children had religious instruction in the schools. Parents had also an inalienable right to see that the money they contributed was properly spent in promoting education. Then what about the inalienable right of the Nonconformist parents? The whole of the Voluntary Schools in the country numbered about 15,000, and to 8,000 of these, with Church of England managers, Nonconformist parents were compelled to send their children, and yet under the Bill no voice was given to Nonconformist parents in the management of those schools. Further, no guarantee was given that the grants would be devoted to promoting education. Nearly all the Amendments moved from the Opposition side of the House had for their object the increasing of the efficiency of the schools by improving the condition of the teachers and giving them the means to obtain assistants. The Government had really been more generous to the Voluntary Schools than the champions of the Voluntary Schools themselves. It had been asked that some security should be given that the settlement of 1870 should be adhered to by the maintenance of voluntary contributions. The late Archbishop of Canterbury only a year and a-half ago used these words:—

> "We do not at all want to reduce our subscriptions. No one would seriously think that we do. We are willing even to have a certain proportion of subscriptions insisted upon as a condition of the grant."

["Hear, hear!"] But there was an entire absence of any condition of that kind in the Bill, and because subscribers would not contribute voluntarily, the

> "Government said they would make the public subscribe involuntarily. As to the Associations, it was intended by the Bill that these voluntary associations, which were to grow under the watchful guidance of the Education Department, should swallow up the whole of the schools."

It was intended to put a premium upon association, and to put all unassociated schools at a discount, because there was nothing in the Bill to show that the unassociated schools—however reasonable they might be in refusing to join the association—were entitled to the 5s. per head. For all they knew they might only get 2s. 6d. per head, and that was, indeed, really the policy of the Measure as once explained by the First Lord of the Treasury. Associated schools were not only entitled to 5s. per head, but to all the surplus which was left; first of all from the fact that some schools had unreasonably refused to join the associations, and in the next place from the surplus which accrued from the fact that less than 5s. had been given to any schools. He would not touch upon the absence of any principles to guide the associations, although they were new bodies, because this point had been sufficiently dealt with. He did, however, wish to say something about the method which had been adopted for carrying the Bill into law. If the Bill were so good that it did not require amendment, then the arguments of the Opposition would go. But what was the confession of the Vice President on the matter? Did he suggest that the Bill could not be amended? On the contrary, he suggested most distinctly on the Second Reading, that it could be amended with profit, and assured the House that

> "any Amendment which really goes to secure that this State-aid grant shall be used really for the purpose of promoting and improving the education of the country will be welcomed by the Government."

There had been no Amendment accepted in Committee, and the Bill had been forced through by extraordinary methods. There had been at least four Motions giving it precedence at the beginning of the Session, when there was no pressure of time at all, and when the Government were not proposing to give the money this year at all. There was no necessity for immediately passing it into law, and yet all other legislation had to be stopped in order that this Bill might be put through. As he had said, there had been four Motions of precedence, and the closure had been applied 29 times for a Bill of one clause—although the Solicitor General had admitted that there had been no unreasonable discussion in Committee—and on eight of these occasions there was a comprehensive closure putting certain words of the clause, the result of which was to wipe out important Amendments, one of which was to the effect that inspectors of schools should be asked their opinion on the schemes of the associations for distributing the money. He complained that the Bill would be perfectly unequal and unfair in its operation when it became law. When the Government were calling upon the general taxpayers of England and Wales to contribute to this special aid grant, they were entitled to see whether all parts of the country got fair treatment in the matter. Wales and Monmouthshire, which had been treated as a separate educational entity in secondary education and other matters, would receive under the Bill £23,888, upon the present average attendance. But the sum to which Wales and Monmouthshire would be entitled according to population, which was the fair test when they were taking the money which the general taxpayers contributed to the Exchequer, was £37,840, so that every year Wales got £13,952 less than she was entitled to. That showed how unequally the Bill would affect various portions of the kingdom. He would give one striking instance which would show the House how absolutely unfair the endowment contained in the Bill would be. The parish of Ystradyfodwg provided out of the inhabitants' pockets by rates, education for 10,447 children. That was not the population, but the number of children in average attendance. Ystradyfodwg had as nearly as possible the number of children in average attendance as in the Voluntary Schools in the Isle of Wight, where the number was 10,207, and in Westmorland where it was 9,956. The Welsh parish already provided for the education of the children out of the pockets of the ratepayers, but compare its position with that of the Isle of Wight and Westmorland? Ystradyfodwg would get nothing under this Bill for these 10,000 children; or, if it did, it would get £10 in respect of one Roman Catholic School, where the number of children in average attendance was 43. Therefore, although hard-working inhabitants of Ystradyfodwg would, as taxpayers, have to provide some of the money which made up the special aid grant, they would receive nothing, while the Isle of Wight would get £1,805 and Westmorland £2,111 a year. Could it be said that a Bill which teemed with inequalities and unfairnesses of this description was a fair and equitable Bill which ought to be passed by the House? Lancashire, with only five and a-half times the population of Glamorganshire, got over 16 times as much special grant. Upon what basis of fairness on equity of taxation could they defend a principle of that kind, in giving money from the National Exchequer by which a place with only five and a-half times the population of another got 16 times as much money? The population of Glamorganshire was 687,218, and its share of the special grant would be £7,000. Cheshire, Gloucestershire, and Lincolnshire had each practically the same population, but Cheshire would get £25,000—namely, nearly four times as much; Gloucestershire £15,000, twice as much: and Lincolnshire over £12,000. Monmouthshire had a population of 252,000, and would receive £3,212 from the special grant Berkshire, Hertfordshire, and Oxfordshire, with similar populations, got sums varying from £6,700 to £7,400. Cardiganshire, with a population of 62,630, would get out of the special aid grant £600 a year; while Westmorland and Flintshire, with much the same population would get, the former, £2,111, and the latter £2,438. The cases of the county boroughs disclosed similar glaring inequalities. The three county boroughs of Wales were Cardiff, Swansea, and Newport. Cardiff, with a population of 128,000, would receive £1,639. Blackburn, Preston, and Birkenhead had practically the same population, and yet Blackburn would receive £4,478, Preston £4,364, and Birkenhead £3,268. Swansea had a population of 90,000, and would get £1,096 out of the special aid grant, while with similar populations, Burnley would get £2,064, St. Helens, £3,307, and Wolverhampton £2,170. Newport had 54,707 inhabitants and would get £799 per annum, compared with £2,154 for Wigan, £2,040 for Bury, and £1,682 for Oxford, three towns with practically the same population. He thought he had given the House a sufficient number of instances to show that the Bill would be absolutely unjust, unfair, and unequal in the distribution of the money. The last ground upon which, he said, the House ought not to give its assent to the Third Reading of the Bill, was because the Measure was not conceived in the interests of education, and would not promote educational efficiency. How were they to compete with their neighbours abroad who gave their children a better elementary and technical education than they did; when at all times in this country every effort was to curb the expenditure of the Board Schools, and not to increase but to reduce their efficiency to the level of that of the Voluntary Schools? These two classes of schools were to be maintained for the purpose of disseminating further religious differences between the children of the country. Their minds were to be filled at an early age with dogmas and dissensions, and to be poisoned with acrimonious dissensions between creed and creed. The children were to be trained to be better Anglicans or Catholics, instead of to be better and more useful citizens.

MR. J. L. WANKLYN (Bradford, Central) said that his constituents were peculiarly interested in this question, for Bradford was the birthplace of the Act of 1870. On the 2nd of the present month the right hon. Member for the Brightside Division, in a speech at Bradford, expressed surprise that he had not taken part in the discussions on this Bill. The fact was that he did not regard this Bill as an Education Bill in the sense of the Bill of last year—not as a comprehensive Measure establishing any new principles, but simply as a vote in aid of a system already adopted and approved by the majority of the country. The necessity for this Measure was a remarkable tribute to the foresight of Mr. Forster, who, first recognising that the people of this country were really religious, would have nothing to do with schemes of secular education, pure and simple. Mr. Forster foresaw that denominational schools would increase, but he did not foresee that the subscriptions to such schools would be doubled in 25 years, and that the attendance in the schools would be more than doubled. Mr. Forster severed himself from his colleagues, with whom he had been most closely associated, rather than sacrifice the interests of education to Party expediency; and it was to be regretted that there were not more statesmen of Mr. Forster's blood on the Opposition Front Bench. In Bradford to-day there were 31,000 children in elementary schools, and of those 10,000 were in the Voluntary Schools and 21,000 in the Board Schools. The precept for the Board Schools for the present year was £52,000, and that for the year to come was estimated at £54,000. Therefore, if the Voluntary Schools were extinguished, an additional £27,000 would be thrown on the rates, or a rate of 8d. in the pound. Every third, and probably one-half, of the £54,000 was found by the supporters of Voluntary Schools, who got nothing in return from the rates. The Bill would give the Bradford Voluntary Schools £2,500, which would be a welcome contribution; but he could only regard it as a first instalment. In the West Riding there was a diminishing minority, who wished to disestablish and disendow the Voluntary Schools; but the great majority regarded education as a matter of national importance. They thought that voluntary subscriptions in aid of national schools were as absurd an anomaly as voluntary subscriptions to the Army, Navy, or Civil Service. They believed that as long as a school complied with the requirements of the Education Department it was entitled to as much aid from the rates, or from the State, or from both, as it needed. That was statutory equality; and as to representation on the management, he should be glad to welcome it as soon as the demand for voluntary subscriptions was abandoned. If the public accepted the buildings, endowments, and subscriptions of the supporters of Voluntary Schools, they must also accept their teaching, management, and association. In Yorkshire they did not understand the waste of the public time which had been brought about by the Opposition in the discussions on this Bill in Committee. The hon. Member for the Keighley Division, in a speech at Bradford on the 2nd inst., admitted that he had been put up to talk against time.

MR. J. BRIGG (York, W.R., Keighley): Will the hon. Member kindly quote the whole of my speech?

MR. WANKLYN said that he could not so far trespass on the time of the House. The time of the country which had been thus wasted might well have been devoted to the Bill for Necessitous School Boards or to the Employers' Liability

Bill. It was the first time in which an English Member—certainly a Yorkshire Member—had deliberately talked against time, and had the cynicism openly to avow it in Yorkshire. Hon. Gentlemen opposite denied that they had obstructed the Bill. It was, however, the fact that in all the stages of the Act of 1870 there were only 31 divisions; while on this Bill there had been no less than 54 divisions, apart from those pertaining to the closure. Hon. Members opposite had sent the fiery cross round to the conventicles. Members had been deluged with printed resolutions prepared in Parliament Street. The Opposition had raged furiously, but they had imagined vain things. One of the most remarkable phenomena in the North of England was that the sectarian strife which was in full blast 25 years ago had almost died out now. The hon. Gentleman opposite might have been warned by the hapless fate of the hon. Member for Flint in moving his Resolution last month in favour of the Disestablishment of the Church. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Fife was face to face with a serious dilemma in giving his vote on the Third Reading of this Bill. He admitted that this money was necessary for the efficiency of the Voluntary School system, and if he voted for a grant in aid he was lending his countenance to obstruction and waste of time, and if he voted against the Bill he was sacrificing the interests of education to the expediencies of Party. It would certainly seem to a dispassionate reader of the right hon. Gentleman's speech on the Second Reading of the Bill of last year that if he voted against this Bill he would simply stultify his speech. The right hon. Gentleman was the Leader of one of the many groups composing Her Majesty's Opposition. On his shoulders had fallen the mantle of Elijah, and to him his followers looked for prophecy. He was in a responsible position, and had no right to unite in destroying the efficiency of Voluntary Schools until he had declared what he proposed to substitute.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle) said it was his good fortune to take some part in the passing of the Act just referred to, introduced by his right hon. Friend the late Mr. Forster, and the hon. Member who had just sat down could never have read Mr. Forster's life, or looked at his reported speeches, for if there was one thing more than another clear in Mr. Forster's policy, as Members who were associated with Mr. Forster would know—the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Brightside Division was one of them, but there were not many now in the House—it was that while there was to be an excellent system of national education, nothing was to be done to hinder, and everything to promote, the efficiency of Voluntary Schools, not because they necessarily formed part of a great system of national education, but because they were there, and had done excellent and useful work, and the aid they had given could not be denied. But Mr. Forster's leading principle was that he would never be party, and there were many who felt this with him, that he would never be party to mere secular education, or, as he termed it, to a system of education in which the only book to be excluded from the school was the Bible. Had Mr. Forster lived to this day he would have felt that that for which he had so long and earnestly laboured had been emphatically carried out, and upon the testimony of all who had examined it, the religious education in Board Schools, apart from creeds and catechisms, was sounder and better than the education put forward in the national schools. The remarks of the hon. Gentleman had led him into a line of thought with which he had not intended to trouble the House. Not long ago he recommended a friend of his, a vicar in a northern town not very far from the hon. Gentleman's constituency, not to trouble himself with his school, but to hand it over to the School Board of the town and to confine himself to carrying on his Sunday school. His friend told him afterwards that he had taken this advice, that he was confining himself to religious teaching on Sunday, and more than that, he said he had a much larger attendance on Sundays of children much better able to understand the creed and catechism he conscientiously felt it his duty to teach. The hon. Gentleman opposite had spoken of the numbers of divisions on the Education Bill of 1870, and said they were 31, and he had thought as he watched the divisions on the present Bill, how extraordinary Mr. Forster would have thought the conduct of right hon. Gentlemen on that side when they refused to accept any single word of amendment from the Opposition. The Debates of that time were for the purpose of perfecting a system of education, and hon. Members who held Conservative views entered with zeal into the question. The Solicitor General told his right hon. Friend, who had opened this Debate, that he would give him an answer with regard to the constitution of these associations of which so much had been said, but all the information the House had was of a wretchedly negative character. How the association was to be formed, how the elective body was to be composed, and how the selection was to be made they had not been told, but they had found out that the parents were to have no representation, teachers were to have no representation, and that there was to be no limit to the representation of parsons on the associations. That was so far as their information had gone, but no more did they know about the constitution of the bodies who were to distribute this 5s. grant to which no school refusing to associate was to be entitled under this Bill. If no such school was to be entitled to the grant, what was to become of the money? Other schools would be entitled to more than 5s. if necessitous, and no definition of necessitous had been forthcoming, for it was a very difficult thing to define. He was a Voluntary School man, for he had had nothing to do with any other class of schools, and he knew that a school might be necessitous one year and rich the next year. The very act of repainting a school room might make a school necessitous. No light had been thrown on the question how the money was to be distributed, how association was to be brought about. There was a school in his constituency in which his family were interested, a necessitous school; but it was impossible to say how that school was to be associated, or if it was to be bound up with a Catholic school. The Bill of last year he had tried to understand. It was difficult to do so, and he had not succeeded, but *de mortuis nil nisi bonum.* This Bill he understood at First Reading, was simply a Bill for the endowment of the Established Church. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] The Government missed a great opportunity for doing a great deal of good, but they had done nothing practically to meet the general demand for better education, but to endow Voluntary Schools. They had left Board Schools so far quite untouched; they had made a grant to a class of sectarian schools of national money received from all classes of taxpayers, unaccompanied by any of those safeguards prudence would suggest. There was no condition for the improvement of teaching or of the position of teachers; no condition as to the maintenance of subscriptions, for the phrase in the Bill, "having due regard," might be turned either way, and might mean the absence of subscriptions should be a condition of assistance.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: The words are, "due regard being had to the maintenance of voluntary subscriptions."

SIR J. PEASE said that might mean that subscriptions having fallen off, the grant should be the larger. He knew what was intended, but how was it to be put into practice? No local control was given to parents or to taxpayers. He had influenced the turning of several Voluntary Schools into Board Schools, for it made little difference whether they were supported by subscriptions or rates, in order that parents might have something to do with the election of those who had the superintendence of education. The experiment had been successful in every case. Parents took a warmer interest in the schools, and the attendance of the children was better than when the schools were under the control of clergymen and a few persons who happened to take an interest in them. What they who were Protestant Dissenters objected to was that in many of those schools doctrines were taught to which they most strongly objected, and yet the taxpayers' money was to be given to those schools to teach Dissenters' children that an undesirable eternal fate belongs to all who do not join the Church of England. He felt very keenly that, while the State gave this money to these schools, there ought to be some control at any rate of the religious teaching beyond that of the vicar of the parish. So satisfied were the people of this Bible-loving country with the Board Schools, that whilst 464,000 children had gone into the Voluntary Schools since 1880, no fewer than 1,109,000 children had gone into the Board Schools, and the parents were satisfied with the education given. Now what was the position of those Voluntary Schools? They were supported by the rich people of this country, the landed interest, to which Parliament made a donation of two millions a year last Session. Parliament was now giving them £460,000 more to what was pure endowment of the Church of England—a Church that already had something like an income of £5,500,000 per annum. The question of the quality of the teaching in those schools had scarcely been alluded to in the Debates. In London the aid per head for teaching power was £1 1s. 1d. per child; in Manchester it was 12s. 10d. more in the Board Schools than in Voluntary Schools; in Birmingham, 13s. 4d.; Leeds, 12s. 9d.; Sunderland, 7s. 6d.; Newcastle, 9s. 3d., and in England generally it was about 9s. 3d. Now in this Bill there was no provision whatever that the 5s. grant was to go for the better payment of teachers. He could not help feeling that this Bill marked a step back and not a step forward in the great cause of education. What we wanted was not these local grants, but a general pushing forward of all our schools. The Bill, instead of giving £650,000 to the Voluntary Schools, ought to have given the same grant to all schools, and let the managers push forward education in every direction. When one looked at the social state of the country, we must all feel that our schools were not being kept up as they ought to be. Those unsettlements of the working classes which one witnessed on every hand seemed to him to arise from the want of sufficient education. He believed the Bill was going to do more harm than good, that it was going to revive those sectarian animosities which had stood so much in the way of sound education in this country, while at the same time the country was losing ground among the nations of the world.

Lord HUGH CECIL (Greenwich) said he never heard of a Church school in which such a doctrine was taught as that alluded to by the hon. Baronet; till he did, he should not believe it was taught. [*Cheers.*] It would be much more to the purpose if hon. Members, instead of indulging in flights of imagination about what was taught in Church schools, would take the trouble to read the Church Catechism; they would find there nothing in the smallest degree uncharitable to any class of Christians whatever. [*Cheers.*] They would find in it, moreover, nothing which could be called dry or abstract theology. The theology taught was made, as it ought always to be, subordinate to practical devotion or practical morality, precisely as it was throughout the Bible. He really was at a loss to understand why it was that hon. Members opposite persisted in regarding the Education Department as not a public controlling body; his only criticism of the Bill was that the control given to the Department was of so tremendous and far-reaching a character that he felt some apprehension what the result might be. With regard to the remarks of the right hon. Member for East Fife on the drafting of the Bill and the particular effect it had had on procedure, he could not help feeling that a new system of drafting Bills had been introduced, in which details were left to the discretion of a Department. He could not help feeling that they were being guillotined without being aware of it. He thought it showed that some changes of procedure were urgently necessary; but he could not help feeling that those who regarded the procedure of the House with an almost superstitious veneration, must feel a little uncomfortable. Had they adopted some moderate reform, such as the carrying over of Bills to a future Session, then such a contingency as this would have been avoided. They might look forward to a Home Rule Bill which would be drafted quite simply in a clause or two, saying that "a separate Parliament should be set up in Ireland—[*Nationalist cheers*]—having due regard to the rights of the Unionists." That would be a simple clause, and would greatly facilitate the progress of the Bill. But he wanted rather to call attention to the great power of the Department from the point of view of the schools. The point of view of the Vice President himself was one which might well occupy the attention of the House. He could not help feeling that, great as were the powers given to the Department, it might not be inappropriate to say that the head of the Department became the Dictator to the Voluntary Schools. Well, uneasy was the head that wore a crown; and there were some circumstances which might make that dictatorship very memorable. One was the probability of entirely satisfying all the schools when the arrangement was to be made; and though he ventured to hope with the Solicitor General that the managers would be as public-spirited as possible, there would undoubtedly be a certain amount of rather harassing criticism levelled at the head of the Education Department, whatever arrangement that Department might make. But it was not only from the managers of schools that he anticipated trouble for his right hon. Friend. It was also very easy to see, when the Education Estimates were under discussion, it would be perfectly open to any hon. Member to move a reduction of so many five shillings in the grant. Whenever a school was suspected of giving sacerdotal instruction, or whenever any other grievance was discovered it was quite open to any hon. Member to move a reduction, and so introduce a long and tedious discussion. The Vice President, when he went home after such a discussion, might feel that, though one was a dictator, there was much to be said for ploughing as a recreation. It was very important to consider the effect on the schools themselves. It was worth observing that the Department to which this great control was entrusted, however great might be the confidence of the Voluntary Schools in this or that particular Government, had not got the regard which inspired great confidence on the part of the schools. It was sufficient to observe, on this point, that two very important Bills which were introduced when a most friendly Vice President was at the head of the Department—he meant his right hon. Friend the Member for the Dartford Division—were anything but agreeable to a large number of Voluntary Schools. The Free Education Bill was, in many respects, anything but what they desired, while the Welsh Intermediate Education Act was acutely felt as a grievance by the friends of Voluntary Schools. So that, if they could not feel very great confidence in the Department even when there was a friend at the head, when there was an unfriendly head that confidence would very much diminish. He would observe, that while hon. Members opposite had, by the circumstance of the money being voted annually, a very convenient method of harassing Voluntary Schools, that did not apply to the friends of those schools. There was no parallel power given to them to defend their interests on the Estimates, and the only remedy, he imagined, would be to move a reduction of the Vice President's salary, which would not be altogether a satisfactory course to adopt. In this respect the Bill gave greater advantage to the critics than to the friends of Voluntary Schools. He could not help feeling that, though the Department, or a hostile head of the Department, might, under ordinary circumstances, not be a very formidable enemy to the Voluntary Schools, still there was one set of circumstances under which, very possibly, such a head of the Department might be very dangerous, and that was in the case of a majority in that House hostile to Voluntary Schools carrying through a Bill which was unfriendly or destructive in its policy. He believed that such a policy would not be welcomed by the country at large, and he believed, therefore, that, following recent precedents, the House of Lords would probably make itself the interpreter of public feeling, and might reject the Bill. What would then happen? Would not an unfriendly Vice President then use all the powers that this Bill left in his hands to make the position of Voluntary Schools intolerable, and force them to capitulate? If he did not do that, would not some hon. Member behind him rise and force the hands of the Government, by refusing the grant, which they had the power to do, when it came up on the Estimates? But for one circumstance that fear of reprisals would seem to be a very terrible one. It seemed to him less terrible, because he did not expect that such a majority hostile to Voluntary Schools would ever exist in that House, having regard to the attitude of hon. Members around. But he would remind some of his hon. Friends above the Gangway that, owing to their action as critics of rate-aid, the Government had been induced to adopt a method which exposed the Voluntary Schools to greater danger than any method of rate-aid. There was one reprisal which, he thought, threatened very serious danger. Hon. Members opposite might not take away the grant; they might equalise it by giving a corresponding grant to all Board Schools. That would, of course, destroy the effect which the present Bill would have in diminishing the severity of what was called competition, and in a very short time the position of Voluntary Schools would not be less distressed than it was to-day. He thought, from those points of view, this Bill was a legitimate object of apprehension to the friends of Voluntary Schools. Then, there was the question of inadequacy. They did not know how inadequate the relief would be until they saw precisely how the arrangement of giving different grants to different schools would work, but no one who had looked carefully into the matter could doubt that inadequate to some extent it would be. And certainly, if the standard of education went on rising in the future as it had in the past—and there was no reason to expect a slackening—then in a few years they would be as badly off as they were to-day. Those were some criticisms which, it seemed to him, friends of Voluntary Schools were entitled to make in regard to this Bill. But he did not wish to be understood to think that there were not merits of a very transcendent kind in many parts of the Bill. There was the giving of the grant itself at a moment in which the Voluntary Schools were in the greatest possible distress, and without which, there was little doubt, a large number of them would have succumbed. He thought that circumstances had, perhaps, protected his right hon. Friend the Leader of the House from criticisms from his own side during the earlier and more critical stages of the Bill. There was a proverb, "It's ill talking between a full man and a fasting," and it was ill disputing between the Treasury and dying Voluntary Schools. The grant had come at a moment when many of them were at the last gasp. He thought a service of not less importance was done to Voluntary Schools by the provisions in regard to associations. He did not think it could be doubted that in that way a strength of combination would be given to Voluntary Schools, and that they would have, when next this question came up for discussion, a powerful organisation ready to hand which would be the spokesman and defender of the schools. ["Hear, hear!"] It was not true, as hon. Members had so often represented, that the settlement of 1870 had never been infringed until this Bill was introduced. He might say, in passing, that nothing, to him, was more astonishing than the extraordinary reverence with which hon. Members seemed to speak of the settlement of 1870. He did not know of a piece of legislation which seemed to him to deserve it less. It was not the first time that that statute had been infringed. It was infringed when the Education Act was passed; but by a gradual process by which the standard of education had been raised higher and higher, the conditions of the settlement of 1870 had been made wholly different. This was the first important innovation on the settlement of 1870 in the interests of Voluntary Schools, and what had been done once might be done again. They had at last broken through the supposed sanctity that surrounded that statute; and they looked forward with confidence to repeating it. He listened with interest to the speech of the hon. Member for Merionethshire. He thoroughly agreed, and every Churchman would agree, that the case of Nonconformists in rural districts was a hard one. But hon. Members did not avail themselves of the opportunity last year afforded by Clause 27 of obtaining some relief. Was it impossible to induce the Nonconformists—he meant the religious Nonconformists who sincerely preferred their positive religious beliefs to their political attitude—to abandon the position they had hitherto taken up? Could they not have a new and nobler compromise, which should proceed on the theory of providing religious instruction for every considerable denomination all over the country, or wherever required? He thought that, if the Nonconformists made the experiment, if they entered into negotiation with Churchmen and Roman Catholics on the subject, they would find the terms offered to them would almost err on the side of generosity; they would have almost everything they asked for so long as the denominational schools were secure. They would relieve the present educational situation of many of its difficulties. Neither Nonconformists nor Churchmen on this question were altogether in a comfortable position. Those who acted with the Conservative Party had to face the circumstance that many

Conservatives regarded the whole duty of that Party to consist in the defence of property; and those who acted with the Liberal Party contained among them many Liberals who had no interest or affection for religion. Was it not possible that the religious Nonconformists should join with Churchmen in making a lasting settlement of the education question, so as to overcome the opposition of Conservatives who worshipped property and of those Liberals who despised religion? [*Laughter.*] That would be a settlement which would nearly reach the settlement of the education question which hon. Members professed to desire. Then they would reach a desirable religious peace, which was a very good thing. Now that they had succeeded in carrying the Bill the game of unsectarianism was up. [*Cheers.*] The future was a denominational settlement which would give religious peace and harmony between the different sects, death to none; which would give, in short, life and not death in the interests of justice, equality, and religion itself. [*Cheers.*]

On the return of Mr. SPEAKER, after the usual interval,

MR. ALFRED THOMAS (Glamorgan, E.) said the noble Lord had expressed surprise that the hon. Member for Mid Glamorgan should be so eager to have local control, and had suggested that the Department was equal to all that was necessary from that point of view. But the statement had been quoted earlier in the evening by the Vice President that the Department had no knowledge of the localities, and, therefore, it could not properly take the place of men elected by the ratepayers. He was afraid, from what the noble Lord said, and having regard to the fact that he might be presumed to know a little of what was going on in the inner circle, they could not expect very generous treatment of the Board Schools. His chief reason for voting against the Bill before the House was that it gave the Government the power to apply funds to purposes outside of their administrative functions. He went so far as to say that a Government had no right to exact a penny more by way of taxation from the people than was necessary to administrate the public affairs of this country. Apart from the question of principle, he would deem it his duty to oppose the Measure, as he believed the effect of such legislation would be to aggravate the worst evils of the present system. Our educational system might be divided under two heads—the Board Schools and denominational schools. In Board Schools no difference was made between one child and another; all were taught alike, and nothing was taught in those schools calculated to prejudice the minds of the children against any section of the community. On the other hand were the denominational schools, where the first thing that was taught was that the creed of the particular denomination that controlled that school was the only orthodox one, and that those outside of that church were schismatics. ["No, no!"] By this Bill it was sought to further endow such schools by five shillings per scholar. Then, it was believed that by the provisions of this Bill the already humiliating position of the teachers in denominational schools would be still worse. It was feared that, added to the danger of being dismissed at the whim or pique of the clerical autocrat, dismissal within the confines of the association would mean no chance for another appointment within that area. If imitation were the sincerest form of flattery, then the friends of the much-derided Board Schools could not but feel flattered that the sponsors of this Bill should set up those associations which, after all, were only School Boards by another name. He recognised in this one of the most retrograde Measures of modern times. While all other countries were advancing they were retreating into the Middle Ages. In the February number of *Harper's Magazine* was an interesting article on Mexico, in which the educational system is dealt with. The Mexican President was asked whether they taught religion in their public schools. His reply was "No; that we leave to the home." Again, what an object lesson the late general election in Canada must have been to those who wish to force religion into secular schools. That election was fought on the question of national and secular versus denominational schools, and, notwithstanding the strongest and bitterest opposition, the present Premier of Canada achieved one of the greatest victories of modern times. He believed the next General Election in this country would be fought on similar lines, and for that reason he was glad that the Government had introduced the Bill, as it could not but hasten the day when a Measure would be passed through that House, launching forth a system of education worthy of the question and of the age in which they lived. ["Hear, hear!"]

*Mr. JEBB (Cambridge University) said they had heard inaccurate statements which had been exposed over and over again. It was said long ago that there was nothing like repetition for the inculcation of truth, and no doubt the same applied to the dissemination of error. As to the conduct of the Bill in Committee, he found from *The Times* reports that between 200 and 300 speeches were delivered from the Benches opposite in the course of 12 days. They made no complaint of that as the questions were important, but it should not be said that there was not a full discussion. About 200 speeches were delivered on the first clause. The Amendments had been of two classes—those that would have been destructive of the Bill and those that were regarded as making no improvement in the Bill. In the latter class there was a tendency to enlarge the discretion left to the Education Department so as to make the burden on it intolerable, or to go in the opposite direction and limit the discretion where it should be left free. Amendments were sometimes, as they knew, accepted with the view to smooth the course of a Debate and to conciliate; but on this occasion there was no reasonable prospect held out that the acceptance of any Amendment would have that effect. ["Hear, hear!"] As to the claim for local control, he could not understand why those who made no contributions should be represented on the associations. The Member for Bodmin spoke of expediency or non-expediency, but there was the main point—justice. The Member for Wolverhampton instanced the case of the police, but there was a local police rate. ["Hear, hear!"] As to defining a "necessitous" school, the Department would have no practical difficulty. Suppose an efficient school was carried on at a loss, that was clearly a necessitous school. If a school was efficient and the teachers were underpaid, that was a necessitous school, and so on. But no abstract definition could cover all cases. Then it was said: "Will not people leave off their subscriptions in order to make their Voluntary Schools necessitous?" In reply to this, he pointed out that the Department had a continuous knowledge, through its inspectors, of each school. It could easily detect a case of such self-induced poverty, and refuse aid. ["Hear, hear!"] The fee grant of 1891 was a gain to many Voluntary Schools in rural districts. Yet it had not been followed by any general decline of subscriptions. Then it was said that there was no security in the Bill that subscriptions would be kept up. The answer to that was that the Department was directed to have "due regard to the maintenance of voluntary subscriptions." The objection rested merely on the ground that no hard-and-fast line was drawn. But no universal and rigid rule could be laid down, because there were cases in which the amount of the local subscriptions might fall, without its being the fault of the people in the district, *e.g.*, through the death of a generous squire, or through a villa population being ousted by a working-class population in the suburb of a large town. There were also cases in which the subscriber was entitled to relief, *e.g.*, the poor clergyman whose zeal for education had led him to give much more than could fairly be asked of him, and there were poor districts of large towns where it was extremely difficult to get any considerable amount of subscriptions from the pence of the poor, and where subscription was an altogether precarious source of aid. Nothing was more extraordinary to his mind than the terms in which the proposed associations had been described. The right hon. Member for East Fife, at Bradford, on March 1, described their operation as the "practically unfettered control of private associations, armed, as they would be, with coercive powers, and absolutely irresponsible to Parliament." That description was as full of contradictions of fact as any statement of the same length could be. ["Hear, hear!"] Then the Leader of the Opposition, at Norwich, on March 17, said:

> "They say these voluntary associations are intended to advise the Education Department. No; they are intended to coerce the Department."

How on earth did the right hon. Member infer from the Bill that the associations would have power to coerce the Department? As a matter of fact the associations would have no control whatever over the spending of a single shilling of the grant, and the control would rest solely with the Education Department. They would have no coercive powers of any kind. They were merely to advise the Department, which was not bound to take their advice; and the Department was responsible to Parliament for this money, as for all other money spent on education. It was true that the supporters of the Bill hoped that the associations would indirectly do a great deal of good in their respective districts by stimulating the interest taken in education, but this indirect result of their formation was altogether apart from the direct function of the associations as laid down in the Bill, that, namely, of advising the Department as to the distribution of the grant. A great grievance had been made of the fact that there were to be no parents on the associations. If the function of the associations had been to interfere with the management of Voluntary Schools he would have liked very much to see the parents represented; but the associations would have nothing whatever to do with the management of the schools. Then, in a tolerably large association there would be the practical difficulty of finding room for parents in the case of all the schools concerned, and the average parent would very naturally be interested in the school in which his child was being educated, and that would tend to promote just such a scramble for the money as they would all deprecate. With regard to the representation of teachers he should be very glad to see them represented in a local authority for education in the proper sense of the term—a body, he meant, for the discussion of educational policy. But upon associations like these, whose function was simply to advise as to the distribution of the grant, he did not think it desirable that the teachers should be represented, as they would be interested pecuniarily. The right hon. Member for East Fife had told them that the associations would be purely clerical, and the Leader of the Opposition said at Norwich the other day:—

> "We know what the Church Party is. It is a sacerdotal party. It is the domination of the priesthood, and it is to endow that, at their discretion, that £600,000, unconditionally, of the taxpayers' money is to be given out of the surplus of this year."

He had already referred to a statement made by the right hon. Member for East Fife as one that was full of contradictions of fact, and this statement by the Leader of the Opposition was equally so. It had been proposed by the Opposition that one-half of the associations should be laymen, but it would be very difficult to tie the Department down to a certain fixed proportion of laymen, for the circumstances of different districts varied considerably. He believed, however, that the clergy themselves would be the very first to desire to have laymen upon these associations. ["Hear, hear!"] On all existing diocesan associations the laity were largely represented. In Exeter, for example, the number of laymen at the Diocesan Conference was larger than the number of clergy. Therefore, he thought it was certain that the laity would have a very large and important representation on these associations, and the Department would probably require that there should be such representation. With regard to the control of the Education Department by Parliament it ought to be clearly understood that the control of Parliament over the expenditure of the money would be precisely the same as the control which Parliament now exercised over the other funds spent by the Education Department, for the grant would be borne on the Estimates, and could be diminished or withheld at the pleasure of the House of Commons. It was absurd, therefore, to say, as the right hon. Member for East Fife had said, that Parliament was being asked to give a blank cheque to the Education Department. The power given to the Department to discriminate the rates for urban and for rural schools was founded on the deliberate conviction of the Department, formed after long experience, that, taking urban schools as a whole and rural schools as a whole, it would be found that the former were on the average and in the aggregate needier than the latter. But the Department was not compelled to establish a distinction in every particular case; it was only to do so in cases where it held it to be necessary. Urban schools were more needy than rural schools, because there were many children in the former and fewer in the latter, and because the rateable value of rural districts in proportion to the number of children was higher than that of urban districts. Then, urban schools had to bear heavier expenses, because the whole cost of living in towns was higher. The cost of teachers' residences, for example, was greater. Again, a larger number of subjects had to be taught in urban schools than in rural schools. ["Hear, hear!"] Then it was complained that the surplus of the grant would not go equally to associated and unassociated schools, but only to associated schools; but hon. Gentlemen opposite forgot that the proposed distribution of the surplus to associated schools was to be made only if or when the needs of the unassociated schools should have been satisfied. Then with regard to the audit, the House had been told by the Vice President that the Department would regard the word "may" as a positive direction, while the Solicitor General had also said that no one could doubt that the Department, having this power conferred upon it, must regard it as its duty to exercise the power. As to the complaint that the district auditor was not to be employed, he would point out that the district audit would be too expensive for small schools, and out of all proportion to the sum received. The Department would, no doubt, follow the lines of the Blind and Deaf Children Act, 1893, and would employ a chartered accountant, a banker or bank manager, or a professional auditor. ["Hear, hear!"] An Amendment was moved by the hon. Member for East Somerset to the effect that the Department should be officially represented on the association. Those who did not take the hon. Member's view on that point did so, not because they undervalued the worth of the guidance the association would receive from the Department, but because they thought it undesirable to compromise in any way the voluntary character of the association. ["Hear, hear!"] The last point he would touch upon was the 17s. 6d. limit. He was particularly struck by the fact that it was generally assumed that the 17s. 6d. limit operated in the direction of keeping up voluntary subscriptions. He had taken some pains to ascertain from those who were in a position to know, how far that was the case, and he knew that it was the opinion, founded on long experience, of the officials of the Department, that its operation in that direction was exceedingly limited. ["Hear, hear!"] As to the other danger apprehended from its abolition, namely, that too many subjects would be taken up, and that the children would be turned into grant earning machines, the House had been assured that the Department would be vigilantly on its guard against that, and would, if necessary, modify the code to meet any such attempt. He thanked the House for having listened to him so patiently—[*cheers*]—and he would only say in conclusion, that this money was given to save one element in the elementary educational system from being disabled or destroyed. It was given to secure the parents of two and a-half million of children in the exercise of liberty of conscience, and it was given with due safeguards for the proper use of the money for the purposes of education, and under full responsibility to Parliament. [*Cheers.*]

*Mr. THOMAS SHAW (Hawick Burghs) thought that he, at least, would escape the condemnation of reiteration and repetition which the hon. Gentleman opposite, in the course of a speech to which the House had been, as usual, charmed to listen, had so comprehensively levelled against hon. Members on the Opposition side of the House, for he had not, as yet, opened his mouth on the subject of this Bill. He would have thought that it was impossible that a Bill of this comprehensive character, couched in language studiously vague—[*cheers*]—could pass muster at the hands of a House of Commons composed of 670 men, presumably of certain diversity of view, and possessing a certain wealth of experience in these topics—he would have thought it impossible that such a product of any Government, however strong and however wise, could pass unamended in a House so composed. ["Hear, hear!"] It seemed that he was wrong. Was he wrong in consequence of the strength or the weakness of the Measure? He rather thought in consequence of its weakness. It was admitted that the Bill had no solidity in it. It was pronounced by its authors to be an experiment of an elastic and fluid character, and the House of Commons and the country at large would, he thought, be of opinion that £600,000 a year was a somewhat high price to pay for an elastic and fluid experiment. ["Hear, hear!"] In one view, Amendments would have been destructive of the Measure, because it was constructed like a castle of cards, which, if any attempt was made to alter, improve, or buttress it up, would have gone to pieces like the Measure of last year. ["Hear, hear!"] But in answer to suggested improvements, what had they had instead of argument? It was expressed in the old, familiar brocard, *pro ratione voluntas.* It was the will of the Government, it was not argument by which the proposed Amendments to this Measure were met. [*Cheers.*] Why was this money given in the form of a capitation grant? The 5s. a head had, as expressly avowed by the Leader of the House, absolutely no relation to the necessity in the individual case, and no relation to the number of necessitous schools. Five shillings a head might as well have been given in respect of houses or ships or church steeples, as in respect of the number of scholars in Voluntary Schools. The explanation was that as the Board Schools were depleted and the scholars were enticed away from them in Voluntary Schools, so the grant that was to be given would be increased. [*Cheers.*] The Bill was framed on capitation lines, because it was meant to sap and undermine the representative Board Schools of the country. [*Cheers.*] But he had another objection to the Bill, and that was that in an enormous degree there was a dangerous and unconstitutional delegation of Parliamentary control to the Education Department. He was astonished to hear the hon. Member for Cambridge University say that this delegation was the same as in regard to the already existing Parliamentary grants. It was nothing of the kind. ["Hear, hear!"] All suggestions that the Department should frame schemes and thus further set up unity of administration had been rejected, and the Department might distribute this £600,000 according to its own sweet will. In the administration of public money, up to this moment, there had been Parliamentary control, in one or other, of two senses; in the first place, by the express terms of the Act of Parliament itself, and in the second place, notably in regard to education, by schemes to be laid on the Table of the House. The schemes of the Education Department were of enormous value, not in a national or educational sense only, but also in an international sense, because they enabled us, by way of contrast and comparison, to draw the finest lessons in, and so to foster, the development and improvement of our educational system. We had not only to fulfil a duty to the children of this country in view of their future citizenship, but to consider the relation of this country to other countries and to Europe, which was, in point of education, being, in every decade and in every year, more and more artistically and technically trained. He considered it reactionary in the highest degree that money should be distributed by Parliament and that the House should not be able to know, what in the past it had always known, whether the money was to be contributed to the solution of the difficulties and towards the advancement of our people as an educated nation, or was to be distributed from motives and under the action of influences and forces which they could not determine. Parliament had delegated the distribution of the money in a way which he considered a constitutional danger. [*Cheers.*] What, in the first place, was to constitute a "necessitous" school? The hon. Member for Cambridge University said a necessitous school would be a school which had been carried on at a loss. How did he know? Did the Bill say so? Not a bit. He also said a necessitous school was where the teachers were underpaid. This might be due to the stinginess or greed of past contributors. Did the Bill afford any guide or rule to prevent greed or stinginess being rewarded? Not a bit. The Bill was absolutely vague. The right hon. Member for East Fife cited precedent after precedent for the enumeration in Acts or schemes of the conditions under which the Parliamentary grant was to be earned. What was the answer of the Leader of the House? He passed lightly over every precedent except one, and he took up one which, of all others, was the most unfortunate for the Government of the day, that by which powers were given to County Councils and local authorities under the Technical Education Act. The answer to that was, that the present Bill would be improved enormously if the power under it were delegated, as in that case, to representatives of the people of the locality. But he was not satisfied even with that, because, in citing the case of the Technical Education Acts, the Leader of the House cited a case which, in the view of all educationists in this country, was the worst case known. Out of £800,000 or thereabouts granted, under the scheme for technical education, to local authorities, they had impounded, for the relief of their own rates, no less than £153,000 per annum. Never was the vague delegation under this Bill condemned in such scathing terms as those used by the noble Lord the Member for Greenwich. But why did he not assist the Opposition when they wanted to make clear and absolute the conditions upon which the grant was to be earned? The noble Lord did not give a whit of assistance in that direction; and now he deplored the absolute power which might be vested in an Education Department which might not always be in accordance with his views. Then, the Bill called into existence what in Scotland would not be tolerated for an hour—[*cheers*]—a series of associations; and it was impossible to understand whether these bodies were to be advisory or more. He came to the governing bodies of the associations. It was now settled that they would not be representative of the parents whose children were attending the schools, or of the electorate who, in their localities, as taxpayers contributed to the funds, or representative of the teachers. Seven-eighths of the governing bodies of the associations would be connected with the Church of England—clerical advisers, without doubt. Every Amendment which would have introduced the representative element or even a proportion of laymen into the governing bodies had been refused. He said, advisedly, that the Government could have made no worse selection, speaking comparatively, than to choose, in a matter of this kind, a body of clerical advisers. What this nation needed in its competition with other nations and peoples was a more highly educated standard of producing citizens. We wanted higher technical, commercial, and even artistic experience. But at this juncture what had the Government done? It had selected its advisers for one of its own Departments, from a class of men who, of all others, were unacquainted with the world and inaccessible to the range and impact of modern ideas. [*Cheers.*] The Bill was a triumph for sectarianism. This proselytising Episcopacy, by the dictation of overbearing England, was an old and bitter story in Scotland. There was no Englishman with a knowledge of the relations of the two countries who did not think of it with shame. [*Cheers.*] Those memories would be revived, and the Solicitor General would pass as the modern version of the gentleman known as Claverhouse in Scotland. He did not use the methods of antiquated diplomacy. He did not demand their lives, but their money, and Presbyterians in Scotland were to be taxed *pro tanto* to bring up little Episcopalians in England. The Scotch system should never have been mentioned. As far as that system was denominational, he did not defend it. His own view was, "Let Churches and the individual conscience pay and provide for their religion, and let the State teach its citizens civic rights." In Scotland they had a School Board system everywhere. Did the Government dare to imitate that? In Scotland they had liberty everywhere, through the parents and ratepayers who chose their own form of education. Did the Government dare to imitate that? [*Cheers and Ministerial counter cheers.*] What they had done was to endeavour to stereotype a system in which there was no liberty of choice. [*Cheers.*] They had publicity everywhere in Scotland. Dared they imitate that? [The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: "Certainly."] If that publicity was to be imitated, why were not the schemes to be published? [*Cheers.*] The surest antidote to bigotry was publicity. He had seen both English and Scotch catechisms, and there was an extraordinary contrast between them. He did not refer to what English catechism might teach, such as the doctrine of prayers for the dead, the doctrine of transubstantiation—[*cries of* "Oh!"]—but he did refer to this, that they taught as a vital distinction that between Church and Dissent. ["Hear, hear!"] In Scotland they had nothing of the sort, for in their catechism, which was that of Canada, the United States, and Australia, there was no such thing as Church and

Dissent taught or even mentioned. It was proposed that Scotch money should go to support a system of sectarian teaching under which the whole body of Presbyterians as such were outside the Church of Christ. [*Cheers, and cries of* "Oh!"] This Bill was a triumph, not for education, and not for the Government, but for the two noble Lords opposite; but it was only an instalment of what they wanted. What they wanted was the limitless power of the Church over the limitless purse of the State. [*Cheers.*] He contended, however, that the first step which was necessary in educational progress was to de-clericalise education by securing that educational management should be vested in the whole body of the people. The Government was taking a downward, instead of an upward, course. The Bill was reactionary in spirit, unconstitutional in plan, and in its results it would be, in some parts, futile to the point of ridicule, and in the main injurious to the cause of education. [*Cheers.*]

Mr. ERNEST GRAY (West Ham, N.) said it would be charitable to assume that the hon. Gentleman's knowledge of English education was limited strictly to unauthorised editions of certain catechisms. There was repeated evidence in his speech that he knew practically nothing about English education. ["Hear, hear!"] He had suggested that the motive behind this Bill was the depletion of the Board Schools. There were many districts in which there were no Board Schools, and where the village schools were Church schools. Was there anyone so fatuous as to suppose that there were voluntary subscribers who would erect a school at a probable cost of £1,500 in order to earn an annual grant of £25? Those impassioned appeals to sectarian prejudice would never make for that religious peace, under which they could alone hope for the success of the national system of education. It was those sectarian hatreds which made the people able to say, "How these Christians hate each other," and which had militated against educational progress. He had hoped that the day was approaching when the religious fanatic, whether of the Anglican Church or of the Dissenting Churches, would have passed out of existence. But speeches such as that to which the House had just listened contradicted that hope. That speech was in marked distinction to the exceedingly temperate speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Fife, who had moved the rejection of the Bill. During the delivery of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman many of them were, no doubt, entranced with the admirable manner in which the right hon. Gentleman had constructed his arguments. But a few moments of cool consideration would serve to convince them that no arguments were ever so skilfully erected with such slender material. The central principle of the Bill was not denounced by the right hon. Gentleman for one moment. The Voluntary Schools were not even mentioned. The speech was devoted to the methods by which the Bill had been struggled through Committee; to certain details of machinery which the right hon. Gentleman had not condemned, but which he said were vague and too elastic; and recourse was also had by the right hon. Gentleman to a speech of the Vice President of the Council in a Cambridge village. He wondered where the right hon. Gentleman would have been had it not been his good fortune to have discovered that speech, for the most of the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman were founded upon that speech, and not upon what had transpired in the House, or what was in the Bill itself. [*Ironical Opposition cheers.*] He would endeavour to deal with that. [*Ironical cheers.*] He regretted that the Bill had passed through Committee altogether unamended. [*Opposition cheers.*] He had voted for some of the Amendments, and he did not in the least regret having done so. He believed the Bill might have been improved in some particulars; but common honesty compelled him to declare that no encouragement whatever had been given to the Government to accept Amendments, or even to duly consider Amendments. [*Opposition laughter and Ministerial cheers.*] He quite agreed with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Fife that there were three or four points in regard to which the Bill might have been improved; but the Amendments that had been proposed were directed, not to three or four questions, but to 44; and it only needed a limited acquaintance with the procedure of the House of Commons to appreciate the difficulties that would be placed in the way of the ultimate passing of the Measure if any concession whatever had been made by the Government. [*Opposition laughter and Ministerial cheers.*] The Bill had been fought line by line—aye, word by word, not in an endeavour to improve it, but in an endeavour to defeat it. [*Cheers.*] He had no doubt that during the Easter Recess hon. Members opposite, who had used excessive industry in framing Amendments, would go down to their constituents and declare, with self-congratulation, that they had attempted to defeat the Bill by bringing forward no end of Amendments, and they would dwell largely on the fact that the Bill had been pushed through without Amendment. But he believed that the electors of the country would realise that, regrettable as was the fact that the Bill had gone through Committee unamended, a large part of the cause, if not the entire cause, was due to the frivolous Amendments that had been moved, and moved with the sole desire of destroying the Bill. A large part of the discussion had been directed, as in Committee, to what was not in the Bill—namely, the unfavourable position in which Nonconformist bodies existed in the matter of primary education. A constant repetition of that grievance had marked the Debate. He admitted that grievance. No one was more familiar with it than himself, but he would point out that that grievance had not arisen from this particular Measure. It had been in existence before the Bill was introduced. There were two grievances. One was that the sons and daughters of Nonconformist parents would not, in many Voluntary Schools, be accepted as pupil teachers. One would imagine that there were hundreds of thousands of Nonconformist parents who were desirous that their sons and daughters should become pupil teachers. As a matter of fact, it was exceedingly difficult in the country districts to obtain pupil teachers at all. [*Cries of* "Why?"] He admitted the grievance existed, but it was not extensive in its nature. Again, it had not arisen under the Bill. It had existed since the arrangement of 1870, which those who complained of the grievance asked should be still observed. He had a firm belief that the great mass of the electorate took no interest whatever in the sectarian battles over this religious question, whilst no subject was more popular with them than the well-being of the children. They were determined that their little ones should have a better start in life than they had themselves, and they would brush aside the whole of the arguments constructed on Nonconformist grievances and Anglican bigotry, and would look to what the Bill would do to improve the secular education of the children. In his opinion the Bill would do much to improve the condition of secular education throughout England and Wales. Many of the Voluntary Schools were as well equipped, staffed, and as liberally managed as the best of the Board Schools in the country, but on the other hand there were many Voluntary Schools which, if they did not receive immediate pecuniary relief, must close their doors, and the ordinary ratepayer and elector who examined this Bill would examine it from that point of view alone. He would seek to discover whether the Bill would contribute to the improvement of the education of the children, and prevent the cost being thrown upon the shoulders of the local ratepayers. In both these examinations the answer must be a distinct affirmative. He believed it was utterly impossible with an enlightened Education Department to make further pecuniary grants to any of their schools without, in some degree, benefiting the education of the children in the schools. For the proper expenditure of the money in the promotion of education, they had now greater safeguards than ever they had before, not one of the least being the arrangement for an efficient audit. He felt it was exceedingly desirable that not only should satisfaction be given to the parents in the education of their children, but it was essential to the interests of the ratepayer, particularly of heavily burdened School Board districts, that those schools should be kept going without any part of the burden being thrown on local ratepayers. He was glad the Government had decided to avoid the principle of rate aid. Whatever Lancashire and Cheshire might think of the matter, the South of England was practically dead against rate aid, and the imposition of such a principle would have been attended with serious injury to education, would have led to a revolt on the part of the ratepayers, and would not merely have rendered the passage of the Measure impossible, but would have led to the defeat of a Government which attempted to set up such a principle. He rejoiced, therefore, that an attempt had been made to increase the State rather than the rate grant. He noticed that in the Bill the last relic of local contributions was being swept away in the abolition of the 17s. 6d. limit. He was not sorry that that limit was going, but let the House clearly see where they were leading. He believed that one result was obvious and inevitable, and that was that at an early date the entire cost of maintenance would be thown upon a central Exchequer. He did not believe many men in the House would regret the day when that result arrived. There were many safeguards suggested for maintaining voluntary contributions, but the only real and effective safeguard was the interest taken by Churchmen themselves in the maintenance of their own schools. He believed it would be impossible in some districts to maintain voluntary subscriptions at a satisfactory level. That might be a mater of great regret, but with it would come the inevitable change whereby their present dual system of education would be swept away and a national system established, in which the distinctions of Board and Voluntary would be entirely removed. When that day did come they might rest assured that the country would never assent to any system of national secular education which was not based upon and permeated with religious training. If their Debates had made one thing more clear than another, it was that there was a deep-seated determination on the part of parents to have as the basis of all education a sound, fixed religious training for their children attending the elementary schools. The Voluntary Schools and the great majority of the Board Schools were now supplying that education; those were the schools that received the support of the ratepayers, and he believed they on that side of the House need have no fear in facing the electorate on the terms of this Bill. He believed they had the country entirely with them in the attempt to support the Voluntary Schools, though he admitted the grant was not sufficient in certain cases. The country was not yet ripe for a complete scheme; but it would be in favour of the present Measure until the Chancellor of the Exchequer was ready to take over the entire burden. He might regret some of the Amendments which had been lost in Committee, but he still felt justified in supporting the Third Reading of the Bill. His great object was to see the children of the country well educated, and the parents fully alive to the benefits of such an education. No question of armies and navies could compare in importance with the advantages of a well-educated electorate. At present, he knew, much of the expenditure on education was wasted because managers were starved. This Bill would do something to raise the level in the inefficient schools, and to do away with the disadvantages of the poorest communities. It was not an Anglican Bill. [*Cries of* "Oh!" *and ironical laughter.*] Many of the Voluntary Schools belonged to the Catholics and Wesleyans, and almost every Nonconformist sect had its own schools. It was not a Bill for the endowment of the Church; it was an honest attempt—[*cries of* "Oh!" *and cheers*]—if not an extensive attempt to raise the poor up to the level of the rich, and it would tend to the progress of national education, to the welfare of the children and to the satisfaction of the electorate at large. While regretting the absence of some improvements, he felt bound to support the Bill in the House and in the country, and to try to clear away some of the misconceptions which had been assiduously sown by hon. Gentlemen opposite.

*MR. C. P. SCOTT (Lancashire, Leigh) said that the Opposition must be thankful for such small mercies as the admission of the hon. Gentleman that the Bill might possibly have been amended in some particulars. He quite believed with the hon. Member, however, that if the Bill had been touched at all, the whole structure would have tumbled to the ground. If the House had begun amending the Bill, it would have been difficult to stop. The hon. Member for Cambridge University implied that all the objections to the Bill came from the Opposition side of the House. He forgot that some of the most serious and important objections had been raised from the Ministerial

Benches. But the country would certainly not forget that a Measure of this consequence, and touching issues so vital, had been forced through by the brute weight of a majority without being amended in a single particular. The chief ground of complaint, after all, was not with the Opposition, but with the supporters of the Government who had been compelled to follow the Government in docile obedience. Members of the greatest weight and experience had had their advice treated with contempt, and the great Conservative Party had been regarded as the humble instrument of Ministers. That was the picture of hon. Members opposite which would live in history, and be present in the minds of the electors when next they were consulted. A remarkable overture had been made earlier in the evening by the noble Lord the Member for Greenwich, who said that he was in favour of "a new and nobler compromise." The noble Lord said that if the interests of religious education were safeguarded—if the denominational schools were supported and maintained—the opponents of this Bill might do what they liked. There were some who would be prepared to meet the noble Lord on grounds of that kind; but they would want to know which denominational schools and how many of them the nation was expected to support as the condition of having citizens' schools accessible to every citizen. If the noble Lord would tell them that all he wanted was that those who honestly felt that they could not allow their children to go to the ordinary citizens' school, but that they must have religious education of a denominational kind, should, as far as practicable, have provision made for him for the teaching of his own creed, then there were grounds upon which the claims of the noble Lord might be met, and a compromise effected. But the first condition of any settlement was that in every district throughout the land, in every corner of the land there should be schools to which men of every belief and of no belief should be able to send their children, and over which they should exercise a certain amount of control—genuine public citizens' schools. If the noble Lord would concede that, they on that side would be prepared to deal fairly with the denominations, not grudging to the person who conscientiously believed that the education of his children was bound up with particular religious teaching, such satisfaction as it was possible to afford.

*Sir W. HART DYKE (Kent, Dartford) hoped he might be forgiven for interposing, not at length, before the last episode in connection with the Bill, or rather the two Bills, before the House, closed. He referred to the Bill introduced by Her Majesty's Government, and, in the second place, to that mere phantom of a Bill conjured up by the active imaginations of hon. Gentlemen opposite throughout these long Debates. It was difficult to recognise, even to-night, in many of the speeches, that hon. Members who had been discussing this question had ever read the Bill before the House. It would seem that they had not fairly discussed in Committee the clauses of that simple Measure, but that their criticisms had been founded on inference, prophecy, and denunciation of some other Measure, but not the Measure before the House. There had been some curious speeches that night. Among all the weird, strange productions he had heard during his Parliamentary career, the curious lucubration of the hon. and learned Member for Hawick stood prominent. Time would not permit him to follow that strange production, and he would only say this—that it was difficult to say in which that speech most excelled, in the endeavour to stir up to the utmost and bitterest extent sectarian or religious strife, or the extraordinary ignorance shown of the Bill before the House and the whole educational question in England. The hon. and learned Gentleman wound up his extraordinary effort by stating that the Bill, forsooth! was not so much that of Her Majesty's Government as of the noble Lord the Member for Rochester and his brother the Member for Greenwich. If ever there was a ridiculous statement in regard to the educational controversy it was this. His noble Friend and his gifted brother—*Arcades ambo!*—for months past had declared that the special Measure they wanted was one giving rate aid to Voluntary Schools, and not the Bill before the House. There had also been a very able Parliamentary effort from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Fife, and it contained the usual amount of fireworks and combustible material so amply supplied throughout the Debates by right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite. But when the speech came to be examined, and its argument sifted, it crumbled to pieces and withered away. In a magnificent sentence of excellent English, incisively delivered, the right hon. Gentleman asked what would be the position of the unhappy Nonconformist parent after this Bill became law? A terrible question to ask, it seemed; but, analyse the Bill and test its provisions, and he defied any man to show that, with one small exception, with reference to the possibility of a reduction of subscriptions—and this was only prophecy which the Free Education Act had amply falsified—with that small exception, he defied any man to show that the position of the Nonconformist parent in England and Wales would be other than the position he had occupied since 1870. The whole of this denunciation was worthless, for under that same system, with all its disadvantages, and he admitted them, the Nonconformist had continued for 26 years. ["Hear, hear!"] The House had been told that was a sectarian Measure; the same argument applied to the full to the settlement of 1870. He would not occupy time by going over the conditions of that compromise and settlement, but on both sides it was felt in 1870 that, while there were grievances and difficulties—and, alas! they still existed—while the religious element was the big difficulty and stumbling block in any system of education, while there was a grievance in Nonconformists having to send their children to Church Schools, the efforts of the pioneers of National education, and of those who took it in hand when no one else would, must be recognised, and those who made such great sacrifices for education in ancient days now asked for relief for necessitous Voluntary Schools in a Measure that on both sides of the House hon. Members were pledged to support. ["Hear, hear!"] He deeply regretted, in common with all hon. Members, not only the absence, but the cause of the absence, of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition, and although he should allude shortly to something the right hon. Gentleman urged in his speech at Norwich, he hoped, if he read his remarks, it would not cause his temperature to rise in the slightest. [*Laughter.*] The right hon. Gentleman was in excellent form, and in that speech for sheer recklessness of assertion he surpassed himself. This was his description of the Bill as he had cut it from *The Times:*—It was

> "a grant of public money from the pockets of the taxpayers of this country to private bodies, without any reasonable condition as to the proper application of the money."

The Bill said:—

> "The grant shall be distributed by the Education Department to such Voluntary Schools and in such manner and amount as the Department thinks best for the purpose of helping necessitous schools and increasing their efficiency."

The Education Department was now intrusted with the expenditure of no less a sum than £7,306,910, and yet, forsooth, the addition of just over half-a-million to the expenditure for which the Department was responsible was to be looked upon as an innovation and educational revolution. A greater absurdity was never heard. And if by "private bodies" the right hon. Gentleman meant the associations, he was entirely wrong in his criticism, because not one single half-penny would go to the associations; the money would be paid to the managers of each individual school on its merits. ["Hear, hear!"] So much for the extraordinary statements, or rather misstatements, given by way of so-called description of the Bill. No more absurd travesty was ever put before any body of our fellow-countrymen in regard to any Bill whatever. [*Cheers.*] They were told this money was to come out of the pockets of the taxpayers. This whole question was before the constituents at the last election, and the large majority which supported the right hon. Gentleman, and which had supported this Bill by a majority of over 200, was on one basis alone, and it was this, that it was advisable, not only for educational purposes, but for a great fiscal reason which affected the pockets of every taxpayer, that these Voluntary Schools should, at all hazards, be maintained; and it was mere clap-trap—nothing more nor less—to say that this money was dragged out of the pockets of the taxpayers, because the only alternative to the breakdown of the Voluntary system would be, not to take a few hundred thousand pounds out of the pockets of the taxpayers, but to bring on the ratepayers a burden of many millions of money. What was more, he was quite sure that by the time the Bill had been in operation for three or four years under the guidance and supreme control of the Education Department, no future Government, whatever its majority, would ever dare to upset it. Great complaint had been made of the absence of a definition of a necessitous school. In his opinion, to have placed a definition of a necessitous school would have taken away, perhaps, 50 per cent. of the advantages of the Bill itself. It was utterly impossible to give a definition from day to day of a necessitous school, for what was a necessitous school in 1897 would, or might, under the operation of this Bill, cease to be a necessitous school in 1899. The object of the Department would always be to apply this money where it was most needed, and when a school began to reap the benefit of the aid-grant, the Department would move that grant from that school and apply it in another case. He would like to say one word with regard to the associations. He had no doubt in his own mind that these associations must partake largely of a lay element. It was said that these associations were to be associations for fostering and bolstering up Church schools. There never was a statement wider from the fact than that. Let him give the House an instance in support of that assertion. Some years ago the schools near where he lived were in monetary difficulties. There were two British schools representing the Nonconformists, and two Church schools. For many years he was Chairman of a committee, which was really the association of these four schools. The Nonconformists and the Church-people worked hand in hand under a sevenpenny rate, in the management of the schools. The Church endowment was thrown into one common pool for the management of the schools, and they were managed with great success, and earned a good grant. What happened in one case might easily happen again. The question of subscriptions had been raised now, as it was raised at the time of the Free Education Act, when it was urged again and again that the first effect of that Act would be the vanishing of subscriptions. This prediction had been utterly falsified, because subscriptions had increased rather than decreased under that Act. The Department could bring pressure to bear on each individual school. It knew the position and the requirements and the precise amount subscribed; and if subscriptions decreased the Department would ask for a valid reason for their absence, giving, at the same time, an indication that unless good reason was shown no grant would be forthcoming. The more he had heard of the discussion in and out of the House the more he was convinced that, difficult and intricate as the circumstances were, this Bill proceeded on the only possible lines of dealing with a tangled and difficult subject. He prophesied that before it had been in operation five years it would be so successful and so popular, and so much increase the value of our educational system, that no Government, whatever its majority, would ever dare to touch one of its provisions. [*Cheers.*]

MR. JOHN MORLEY (Montrose Burghs): The House has just listened to two speeches from the other side. Those speeches differed a good deal in character, and they differed in source. The hon. Member for West Ham favoured us on this side of the House with a lecture—[*cheers*]—drawn from his ripe Parliamentary experience—[*laughter and cheers*]—as to the method in which Bills ought to be opposed, and in which Bills ought to be carried by those in charge of them. I believe I am right in saying that the hon. Member's experience of seeing a considerable Bill carried through this House is limited to one single Bill. I think, therefore, that we may bear with composure the censures he has passed on us, and we may regard with some wonder that he should have thought a certain number of Amendments on the Paper justified the Government in forcing—I think that was his phrase—the Bill through, while justifying himself and those who think with him in what he admitted was the regrettable course of not pressing the Amendments on the Government, and the Government's not accepting them. [*Cheers.*] My right hon. Friend opposite has had a very different experience from the hon. Member, and he has spoken in a vein and in a tone which the House always likes to hear. He has the great gift of holding earnest views and of expressing them with energy and vigour without producing what he referred to as a rise of anybody's temperature. [*Laughter.*] I was rather struck with one inconsistency on the part of my right hon. Friend. He scolded us because, as he said, our opposition to the Bill was not supported by argument, but only by inferences and prophecies. My right hon. Friend has been in the House a great number of years, and he must have learnt the lesson that most Debates consist of inferences and prophecies on both sides; indeed, he concluded his own speech with a prophecy. [*A laugh.*] I am not partial to prophecies as to what the country will say and do, but, when my right hon. Friend says that we are trying to make political capital out of our opposition to the Bill, may I ask what he will be doing when he fulfils his own announced intention of, on an early day, going to the country and assuring them that this is one of the best Bills which has ever passed through Parliament? [Sir W. Hart Dyke: "That is a defensive operation!"] [*Laughter.*] My right hon. Friend favoured the House with a piece of history which, unfortunately, was wholly incorrect. I have no desire whatever to lessen the credit that is due to the clergy of the Church of England for the interest which they took at a certain point in our national history in education; but when the right hon. Gentleman says that the Anglican clergy were the first persons to take up the cause of national education—[*Cries of* "No, no!"]—

*Sir W. HART DYKE: Perhaps I was not as precise as I ought to have been. I was referring then to the pioneers of the voluntary system of education. If I did not use the word voluntary I intended to do so.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I do not want to labour the point, but my right hon. Friend is mistaken. All education was voluntary in those days—[*Opposition cheers*]—and the pioneers of anything like a national system of education, voluntary or otherwise, were not the Anglican clergy. [*Opposition cheers.*] But I will not pursue that point. My right hon. Friend did what was almost a work of supererogation—he read what he considered the most operative part of the Bill, but he stopped at a certain point. It was, no doubt, very convenient for the purpose of his argument—["hear, hear!"]—for him to do so, but he conveyed an entirely erroneous impression as to what it is that we particularly object to. If the Bill had stopped where the right hon. Gentleman stopped in his recital of the contents of the Bill—that is to say, at the end of Sub-section (2) of the first clause, there would have been very little criticism to offer to it, but it was after the point at which my right hon. Friend left off that we came upon the debateable ground. It will be agreed by those who have heard the speeches to-night, that one of the most remarkable speeches was that made by the noble Lord the Member for Greenwich. The noble Lord made a series of remarks of very great importance and significance. I am not going through them all, but I will draw attention to one of them. My right hon. Friend the Member for Dartford said that the noble Lord and the Member for Rochester were *arcades ambo*. [*Laughter.*] I do not know how far that is a happy application, but we listened to the speech of the noble Lord the Member for Greenwich with great interest, and I ask the House to bear in mind what the noble Lord called a digression; it was a most interesting and significant digression. There is a saying that wisdom comes out of the mouths of babes and sucklings. The noble Lord, in a Parliamentary sense—certainly in no other—belongs to that category, and to-night undoubtedly wisdom came from him. What did he say? Remonstrating with Gentlemen who sit behind the Ministry, he said, "We have witnessed an extraordinary and remarkable and much-needed"—I think he said—"change of procedure." That is the point with which my right hon. Friend the Member for East Fife began and ended his brilliant and masterly criticism of the Bill. [*Cheers.*] The noble Lord said, "We have been guillotined without knowing it." He said that in the time of the French Revolution. [Lord Hugh Cecil: "I spoke of a mediæval period," *and laughter.*] Anyhow, he spoke of the head being severed from the body without the person knowing what was being done. I think that a very weighty and pointed illustration of what the noble Lord meant, and I suggest that the noble

Lord takes exactly the same view of the procedure to which the First Lord has resorted as the right hon. Member for East Fife. But, unlike my right hon. Friend, he thinks this great change in procedure was urgently needed, and he congratulates the House and his Party upon the quietude and calm with which that great change has been effected. What is the change? The Bill is conducted with the deliberate view to the suppression of a particular stage of discussion, which, by the wisdom of our forefathers and by the almost unbroken usage of this House, has been thought an essential stage in the discussion of any important Bill. I do not believe the right hon. Gentleman will be able to show a single exception to the contrary. I have always looked upon the First Lord as one of those who would protect the usages and practices and customs of the House as soon and as earnestly as anybody. It is quite true that there have been occasions in which the right hon. Gentleman has taken part when the practice of the House suffered some violence. There have been only four occasions, so far as I know, of what is called guillotine closure. For two of these occasions the right hon. Gentleman is responsible, and for two of them I am myself responsible.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: There was guillotine in 1882.

MR. J. MORLEY: I was not in the House then, but I submit there was no guillotine closure in 1882 on the scale and by the methods resorted to by the right hon. Gentleman in 1887 and 1888, and by ourselves in 1893 and 1894. I am not arguing whether any one of these four closures was justified or not; I am only pointing out that it will not do for the right hon. Gentleman to take up the position that the opposition given to this Bill was anything like the opposition given to any one of these four Bills. These Bills—the Crimes Bill, the Special Commission Bill, the Home Rule Bill, and the Evicted Tenants Bill—certainly three of them involved important constitutional changes. My point is that in a Bill where there is no constitutional change, which does not excite, as these four Irish Bills did, a violent and a passionate opposition, justified or not, the right hon. Gentleman by the procedure he is adopting, is setting a precedent which will apply to any Bill whatever. [*Cheers.*] I confess I regard with the greatest apprehension and with the deepest regret the precedent which the right hon. Gentleman has set. Some reference was made by the right hon. Member for East Fife to the words of the right hon. Gentleman as to Bills being passed through Committee without amendment. The Solicitor General did not at all deal with the point. What the right hon. Gentleman said in 1895 was that it would be nothing short of a miracle of verbal inspiration for a Bill to be so drafted that it should be passed without amendment. He says the Bill went before a Grand Committee, but that is not the point at all. He has laid down the doctrine that it is impossible to hold that a Bill that is complex, and with a great many details, can go through a Grand Committee without amendments. Of course, that is so. I will call attention to the language of the Vice President of the Council, and the House will see how far the Committee was fairly dealt with. Our charge is that the Committee was unfairly dealt with. What does he say in his speech? He says:—

> "He was quite certain that the Government—he did not know that he had a right to speak for the First Lord of the Treasury—but so far as the Committee of the Council were concerned, any Amendments which really would go to securing that this State-aid grant should be really used for the purpose of promoting and improving the education of the country would be welcomed."

["Hear, hear!"] There were many other Gentlemen who said much the same thing on the Second Reading. They indicated points on which they thought that Amendments were possible, and, in fact, they hoped and anticipated that Amendments would be moved. Talk of "verbal inspiration." Not only has this Bill been produced by some process of that kind, but hon. Gentlemen opposite have for some reason invisible to us, suddenly, as soon as the Bill entered the Committee stage, withdrawn from the views they expressed and advocated before the Bill reached that stage. ["Hear, hear!"] Their Amendments all disappeared from the Paper, and, with a few trifling exceptions, not a single Amendment was moved from the other side of the House. I must notice one other matter and that is, the admission made by the Solicitor General, and it is one which I hope when hon. Members go to the country they will not forget. He admitted to-night that there has not been in our attitude to this Bill obstruction.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL: What I said was that we never had complained that the Debate had been unduly prolonged, for we prevented that by the proper use of the closure. [*Laughter.*]

MR. J. MORLEY: "Unduly prolonged" is a polite way of describing obstruction. Whatever the operation may have been, whatever the cause may have been, there was no undue prolongation of Debate. According to the hon. and learned Gentleman, when it was thought that the Debate was going to be unduly prolonged, then down came the closure and prevented it. That is very interesting to us, for very different language was used by the First Lord of the Treasury, no doubt when under some irritation. It was upon the occasion when the Member for Bodmin supported a Motion to report progress. Then the First Lord of the Treasury said that "if the scale on which right hon. Gentlemen opposite and his right hon. Friend the Member for Bodmin desired to discuss the clauses, sub-clauses, lines, words, and commas"—here there were cries of "No," which is one crude form of expressing dissent—"were to be pursued, I do not see how legislation is to be carried on in this House." But, Sir, something has been whispered, and rather more than whispered, of the intention of the Government to make certain concessions. which they have refused to make to us in this House, in another place. In order to show that that is not a mere hollow rumour, I will just read what was said by an hon. Member sitting opposite. He said:—

> "The Bill of the Government was a wise and sensible Bill. The provision as regards associations, however, was rather dim and misty. It should, however, be remembered that we had a House of Lords, and that there were some extremely clear intellects there who, when the Bill reached that House, would manage to define its provisions much more clearly than the House of Commons. Therefore, if the House of Commons failed to define these provisions sufficiently, there was reason to hope the House of Lords would."

Well, Sir, it would be an extraordinary spectacle if that expectation is fulfilled and if concessions are made in another place which the right hon. Gentleman has himself refused to discuss here. [*Cheers.*] After the speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for East Fife, it is not necessary for me at this hour to make any attempt to go through the various objections we entertain to this Bill, but there were one or two points raised by the Solicitor General with which I should like to deal very shortly. The hon. and learned Gentleman said that it was unreasonable of us to ask the Government to define a word which is really vital to the Bill—namely, the word "necessitous"—and he said that no one on our side had attempted to define this key word of the Bill. To show the difficulty of defining the word one need only recall the excessively infelicitous attempt to do so made by the hon. and learned Member for Stroud, and I only quote it to show what are the difficulties that will confront the Department when they are invited to enter upon this delicate, invidious, and probably impracticable task. ["Hear, hear!"] The hon. Member's definition was this:—

> "A necessitous school is one in which the funds are insufficient to provide for an efficient education, having regard to the cost of education as far as that school is concerned."

I defy any layman and most of the lawyers in this House to explain what such a definition as that can possibly mean—[*cheers*]—and to hand over the working of this Bill to the Department with a definition lurking in the mind so vague and impracticable as that I have read shows that we were right in denouncing the failure of the Government to provide a definition. ["Hear, hear!"] The Solicitor General said that we proposed no reasonable Amendments, and that was the reason why the Government could not accept any of our Amendments. There were, at least, four Amendments we proposed which, in view of the declarations made by Gentlemen opposite, all deserved the consideration of the Government. ["Hear, hear!"] The first point was that there should be representation on the board of managers. There were many Gentlemen on your own side of the House who, throughout the Debates on the Resolution and on the Second Reading of the Bill, all agreed that if some plan could be devised for introducing a representative element they would cordially welcome it. We could not bring a plan before the House for the very good reason that, by resisting and overthrowing the instructions we put down on going into Committee, you took it out of our power to lay before the House any particular plan by which our object could be carried out. The second point was as to the teachers. We proposed that they should be represented on the governing body and that they should not be required and compelled to undertake extraneous duties. With that proposal I am sure many hon. Gentlemen opposite sympathised, and yet merely because the Government had made up their minds that no change should be made in Committee that reasonable proposal was rejected. The third proposal was that Parliamentary control should be brought into play by means of schemes relating to the formation of associations. If the Bill had been conducted with a desire to make concessions and to arrive at a reasonable compromise that, again, was a proposal which would have been accepted. Then we brought forward an Amendment on the subject of efficiency. That Amendment consisted simply of the words of your own Bill of last year, and its object was to make sure that efficiency should be regarded. These are the proposals, and there were several others which would have been acquiesced in by the Government if this Bill had been conducted in conformity with Parliamentary usage and precedent. The Solicitor General says that we have no alternative policy, and do not desire to aid Voluntary Schools. He does us great injustice, and strangely and flagrantly misrepresents the view which we have taken on this side of the House. I defy the hon. and learned Gentleman to point to any Amendment which showed any desire whatever on our part to deprive the Voluntary Schools of an aid grant. It is quite true that there were some Gentlemen who would have preferred the figure of 4s. to 5s., but there is no ground whatever for any such charge as that made against us by the hon. and learned Member. ["Hear, hear!"] None of us have shown any desire to deprive the Voluntary Schools of an aid grant. [*Ministerial cries of* "Oh!" *and cheers.*] When the hon. and learned Member says that we have no alternative policy, he forgets that we did propose distinctly that the grant should be 5s. all round. That was our alternative, and what we said, and say still, is that your machinery is unworkable and will cause endless friction, which will impede the object which you have at heart. Our plan, by which the Education Department would distribute 5s. all round by means of the existing machinery, we say would be a preferable method to your cumbrous and unworkable plan of proceeding by association. The Bill will undoubtedly alter for the worse the character of the Education Department, which will be called upon to perform a number of invidious, I will even say odious, duties, to make all kinds of delicate personal discriminations, and to undertake an amount of work which it is by no means fitted to discharge. The noble Lord the Member for Greenwich wound up his speech with a very important and impressive appeal. He asked why Anglicans, Roman Catholics, and Nonconformists could not unite and present in this great educational controversy a common front against the regard for property in the Conservative Party and the contempt for religion, as he called it, in the Liberal Party. "Let us resist," he said "the scepticism and secularity of our time." I do not agree with the noble Lord on many of these great issues, but as to the existence of secularity I certainly do. But I ask him and those who share his convictions whether you are likely to get Nonconformists to join Anglicans and Roman Catholics, and present the united front the noble Lord desires when he approaches them with a Bill like this in his hand, which does not remove from the Nonconformist any of the grievances he feels so bitterly? The noble Lord's ideal is a generous ideal. But I must say there is another ideal which I do not believe is less generous, and which in many respects is a far higher one. I mean the ideal of a system of education which shall be religious, yet shall recognise to the full perfect civil equality, shall impose no disabilities or drawbacks upon Nonconformists or anyone else, because of their religious opinions or the want of any. That would be a far higher ideal for a free country at this time of day than the ideal of the noble Lord, eloquently and impressively as he sketched it. I will say no more than this—that, whether from an educational or constitutional, Parliamentary or social aspect, we regard this Bill as a mischievous and reactionary Measure, and as such we shall vote against it. [*Loud Opposition cheers.*]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Mr. Speaker, it is with some feelings of natural diffidence that I rise to address the House, because I really feel that Wales and Scotland have had an almost undue share in the Debates on a Bill which principally relates to English education. ["Hear, hear!" *and laughter.*] My hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor General is a Scotchman and a Scotch Member. I am myself a Scotchman, though not a Scotch Member. The right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down is a Scotch Member. The right hon. Gentleman who initiated the Debate is a Scotch Member; the only other Member of the front Opposition Bench who has addressed the House is a Scotch Member, and almost everybody else is a Welshman. [*Laughter and cheers.*] I feel in these circumstances that the mass of English Members may rightly say that their due share in the Debate has been somewhat curtailed by those who doubtless take a deep and reasonable interest in the concerns of English education, but who are, either by birth or representation, not immediately connected with England. Now the accusations brought against the Government on the Third Reading divide themselves into three heads, differing very much as between each other and also in importance. On the first point I do not mean to say much. The Government and my right hon. Friend have been accused of not taking a sufficient part in the Debate. But I must point out that it is an entirely novel Parliamentary doctrine that the Leader of the House of Commons is not entitled to take charge of any Bill brought forward by the Government of which he is a Member. ["Hear, hear!"] He is emphatically so entitled, and I make no apology to the House whatever—[*cheers*]—for having taken the chief part in the conduct of the Measure now before the House, and certainly my right hon. Friend the Vice President of the Council may well feel flattered at the attention which he has drawn upon himself from hon. Gentlemen opposite; for certainly if I have made five or six speeches to his one on the Bill, the attention devoted to his speech by hon. Gentleman opposite has been more than five to one—[*laughter and cheers*]—that they have devoted to mine; and, if I could flatter myself that any utterances of mine in the House, on the platform, or in the magazines—[*laughter*]—could exceed half the interest my right hon. Friend has excited, I should feel I had well earned the position I occupy. I pass from that small matter to what is of far more vital and permanent importance in connection with this Debate, and that is a point in no sense connected with the merits of the Bill before us, but solely and simply directed towards the manner in which this Bill has been carried through the House. We have been accused, and I individually and personally have been accused, of acting a tyrannical part, of forcing this Measure through the House without adequate discussion or adequate Debate, and by such a process of having permanently injured the procedure by which the House of Commons is carried through, and of having given an incurable wound to Parliamentary institutions. [*Opposition cheers.*] That accusation has not been, as far as I know, levelled, or even suggested, by any Gentleman on this side of the House except by my noble Friend who made so brilliant a contribution to our Debate in the course of the evening. The right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, speaking of my noble Friend's utterances in this connection, said that out of the mouths of babes and sucklings came wisdom, according to the ancient text. But, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman misquoted the ancient text—[*laughter*]—the text is that out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise—[*laughter*]—and I confess, whatever else came out of my noble Friend's mouth, I did not notice that the amount of praise he bestowed was either large in quantity or very special in its quality. My noble Friend, no doubt, is a critic, a favourable critic, but still a critic of the Bill, because he is in the position of having a rival scheme of his own, and he naturally, and I may say properly, prefers it to the scheme of the Government, as he is its author. He will forgive me, however, if I say, in reply to him, that although I think there is a great deal to be said for the method of rate aid which, with such perseverance, such conviction, and such eloquence, he has advocated in this House and out of this House—great as are the merits of that scheme, much as there is to be said for it, I do not believe it could be proposed in this House by any responsible Government—[*cheers*]—though that Government had behind it a majority, not of 150, but 200, or 250, without, in the present position of public opinion, ruining the Government that proposed it, and indirectly, and as a secondary but not less inevitable effect, ruining the very cause of which my noble Friend is so ardent and eloquent an apostle. [*Cheers.*] I have been betrayed into that parenthesis on my noble Friend's views—which I think the House would always do well to consider—by his *obiter dictum* upon the methods by which this Bill has been conducted through the House. What is the gravamen of the charge which has been brought against the Government by the Opposition as a whole, backed up by the opinion of my noble Friend? It is that we brought in a Bill, imperfect as they say, and as other Bills might necessarily be supposed to be; that we have not admitted one Amendment; that this course has been dictated not merely by the fact that we objected to the Amendments brought before us, but that we were resolved to deprive the House of Commons of its privilege of rediscussing the whole of the Bill on the Report stage; that in so doing the liberties of the House have suffered curtailment—[*Opposition cheers*]—and that a precedent has been set which may be followed by other Governments—[*Opposition cheers*]—and other majorities—[*Opposition cheers*]—under other circumstances, in a manner fatal to the liberty of Debate. [*Renewed Opposition cheers.*] Sir, I absolutely repudiate any suggestion of that kind. [*Ministerial cheers.*] In the first place, I decline to be criticised on such matters by right hon. Gentlemen who sit upon the front Opposition Bench. [*Ministerial cheers.*] They are altogether out of Court when the question before us is the liberty of Debate. [*Ministerial cheers.*] They have in their time done too much to curtail the liberty of Debate; they have exercised too often the tyranny of majorities—[*Opposition laughter*]—to make their criticism worth considering for a moment—[*cheers*]—when such a question as this is before us. Since the year 1880, when Mr. Gladstone came in with an overwhelming majority in this House, I believe—leaving on one side that famous incident in which the House passed certain resolutions for dealing with its own procedure, after having turned out every Irish representative who sits on the other side—[*cheers and laughter*]—but, leaving that little episode in the history of Parliamentary government out of account—I say, without that, there has been since 1880 by Conservative Governments three stages of Bills closed by peremptory orders. There was the Committee stage and the Report stage of the Crimes Act of 1887—[*Nationalist cheers*]—and the Committee stage of what is known as the Parnell Commission. [*Renewed Nationalist cheers.*] Of the Parnell Commission I say nothing, as the circumstances are too long to detail. But of the Crimes Act, I would say that if the Bill were justified at all—perhaps it was not justified (hon. Gentlemen opposite say it was not; we say it was)—but if it were justified, it was absolutely imperative that it should be brought into existence without delay for the protection of property, life and order. [*Cheers.*] If ever the peremptory closing of a Bill was justified, it was justified in regard to the Bill of 1887. [*Cheers.*] That is the Conservative and Unionist record. The record of hon. Gentleman opposite is that since 1880 no fewer than eight stages of Bills, as compared with three, have been closed by hon. Gentlemen opposite in the same manner, and of these but a comparatively small number were justified by the motives to which I have referred as adequate grounds for the action we took in 1887. [*Cheers.*] No such ground could be taken with the Home Rule Bill—[*cheers*]—no such ground could be taken with the Evicted Tenants Bill; and, therefore, though I think I am bound to justify to the House of Commons the action that we have taken upon this Bill, I do not think I owe either justification or explanation to the Gentlemen who sit on that Bench. [*Cheers.*]

MR. ASQUITH: Will the right hon. Gentleman kindly give us particulars of the eight stages? ["Hear, hear!"]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: There were two Coercion Bills brought in.

MR. ASQUITH: In what year?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: One in 1881 and one in 1882. In each case both stages of these Bills were ended by peremptory means. That is four. Then the Committee stage and Report stage of the Home Rule Bill were ended.

MR. ASQUITH: After how many days?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: The Committee stage and Report stage of the Home Rule Bill were alike ended by peremptory measures. That is six. The Committee and Report stages of the Evicted Tenants Bill were both ended by peremptory order. That is eight, and that is the total I gave. [*Cheers.*] The right hon. Gentleman has his particulars, and I hope he is satisfied. [*Laughter and cheers.*] But, Sir, though I owe no explanation, no apologies, and no excuses to right hon. Gentlemen opposite, I think I am bound to justify to the House anything which may be exceptional, or which may seem exceptional, in the course which the Government have pursued on this Bill. One would suppose, from what hon. Gentlemen opposite have said, that Bills that have been contested never get through this House without amendment. Of course, the smallest experience will convince hon. Gentlemen that no phenomenon is more familiar. My right hon. Friend near me (Mr. Brodrick) has, I think, just passed a Bill without amendment. ["Hear, hear!"] I quite agree that when a Bill is long and complicated, it is almost certain that you will find in it inconsistencies and defects which will not stand examination, and which the Government, whatever their disposition may be, must for very shame correct. That I grant. I also grant it is a most familiar experience of those who have the conduct of Bills that it constantly happens that suggestions may be made in a Bill which is being treated in a friendly spirit on both sides of the House—suggestions which are not improvements, which may be even in some small degree the reverse of improvements, but which, for the sake of peace and of getting on with the business, the Minister in charge of the Bill is prepared to accept. But, Sir, to lay it down as a proposition that in a Bill as brief as is this—for the controversial part was not so much as a page—that the Government are bound to accept Amendments of which they disapprove, or to which they are indifferent, which they do not regard as improvements, for no other purpose than that of conciliating an unconciliatable Opposition, for no other purpose than to secure agreement which is not given, for no other purpose than to save time which will not be saved. To lay that down as a proposition governing Parliamentary procedure is an absurdity. [*Cheers.*] The old bogey has been dangled before gentlemen on this side of the House—"What will happen to you when you are in Opposition? Then the time will come when we, the present Opposition, will profit by and, it may be, improve on the example which you have set, and will mete out to you the measure which you have meted out to us." Sir, we have had so much worse treatment in the past —[*cheers*]—that we are not likely to be frightened by imaginary spectres of this kind. We, who have been subjected to the guillotine in one Bill after the other —[*cheers,* and *Opposition cries of* "No!"]—feel no unduly nervous tremors at these threats. [*Ministerial cheers.*] But this I will say, that if hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite will promise, when the day of their power comes, to treat us no worse upon any Measure than we have treated them upon this Bill, I shall be fully content, and I shall consider that we have done a great deal, not to shake, but to establish, freedom of Parliamentary discussion. [*Laughter and ironical cheers.*] Let me remind the House exactly what amount of time has been taken over this Bill. Recollect, the Bill, for controversial purposes, is confined to the first clause. Not one word has been uttered by any speaker to-night about the second, third, or fourth clause of the Measure. [*Cries of* "Yes," "Gray," *and* "Hart-Dyke."] Well, if five minutes have been occupied on any other clause, it has been the outside, and not one Gentleman on the Front Bench opposite has alluded to any other clause but the first. For controversial purposes, therefore, it is a one-clause Bill, and that single clause, which is not long, has been the subject of controversy at every stage while the Bill has been before the House. That clause was discussed two days on the Resolution bringing in the Bill. [*Opposition cries of* "No, no!"] Then what did hon. Gentlemen discuss during those two days? Two days were occupied, and the only subject of debate was the proposals contained in this clause. [*Opposition cries of* "No!"] Hon. Gentlemen were either discussing what they understood or what they did not understand, and I assume that they understood what they were talking about. [*Opposition cries of* "We had never seen the clause!"] What sticklers hon. Gentlemen are! [*Laughter.*] I will put it in a way which will please them. They spent two days in discussing the propositions which, when they saw the Bill, they were fortunate enough to find were actually in the Bill. [*Laughter and cheers.*] Then they spent a day on the Report stage of the Resolution in discussing the same propositions. On the Second Reading they spent three days more, and then they spent one day on an Instruction. That is seven days. Then 12 days were occupied in Committee, of which it would be no exaggeration to say that ten were spent on the first clause. That altogether is 17 days spent on discussing proposals contained in one page of the Bill which I hope will be Read a Third time to-night. [*Cheers.*] I make this bargain with Members opposite, that when the wheel of fortune makes its turn, and when we or those who succeed us are sitting on those Benches, we shall be perfectly content in being allowed to discuss Bills introduced by right hon. Gentlemen opposite at that length. [*Cheers.*] To tell me that freedom of debate in this House is curtailed by methods of this kind, that there has not been adequate discussion of this bare and outworn subject after 18 days' debate, is to advance a proposition that the natural common sense of the House and of the country will not for a moment accept. [*Cheers.*] Let me say parenthetically, before leaving this subject—and as a comment on the methods pursued by hon. Gentlemen opposite—that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Montrose has just told us that the first two Sub-sections of the Bill were each in their nature uncontroversial. ["Hear, hear!"] That he said in answer to my right hon. Friend behind me, and on these two uncontroversial Sub-sections there were 13 pages of amendments. [*Ministerial* "Hear, hear!" *and laughter.*] Let the House and the country judge of the methods by which this Bill has been opposed. [*Ministerial cheers.*] I leave the important point of Parliamentary procedure for the very few observations I shall make, or that it is necessary for me to make, on the substance of the Bill after the frequent, if not lengthy, speeches I have been obliged to address to the House or Committee on every stage of the Bill since its introduction. The only point with which really it is necessary for me to deal, after the exhaustive speech of my learned Friend on my right, is the assertion that the Bill is an injury to Nonconformists. It has been represented as if it is intended to take from Nonconformists something they already have, and to give to Churchmen, as contrasted with Nonconformists, something that Churchmen have not and ought not to have. A more preposterous proposition was never advanced in this House. ["Hear, hear!"] At all events this will be admitted, that, except for such, and I hope it will be a very small, fraction of the money which will go to the relief of subscriptions, the whole of this money will go, in the nature of things, to the improvement of education. In that education doubtless Churchmen will benefit, but by the very contention of hon. Gentlemen opposite, who continually complain of the number of Nonconformists who, under the existing law, have to send their children to schools under Church management—by the very contention of hon. Gentlemen opposite, any improvement in Voluntary Schools is for the benefit not of the Church of England, or of Roman Catholics or Wesleyans alone, but of every child who attends those schools. It is therefore a benefit, among others, to the Nonconformists, whose cause hon. Gentlemen opposite think it their duty to advocate. But, in the second place, let me remind the House that this Bill does not alter in the slightest degree the legal *status* or position of managers of Voluntary Schools, or the position of children who attend them. If there be a grievance, the grievance dates from 1870; if there be a grievance, that grievance was accepted by the representatives of Nonconformists themselves—[*Opposition cries of* "No!"]—as part of the compromise of 1870. [*Ministerial cheers.*] I do not see how that can be denied, but if we probe to the bottom what hon. Gentlemen mean by the grievance of Nonconformists—or, perhaps, I ought to say, that portion of the Nonconformist body who think that the education in public elementary schools should be secular in its character—[*Opposition cries of* "Oh!"]—well, should never contain any religious teaching of a definite character. [*Opposition cries of* "No, no!"] Very well, the thing that underlies the grievance of which they complain is that the process of squeezing the Voluntary Schools out of existence will be arrested by the present Bill. That is not a grievance. They have no right to say, "We find a system in existence which exercises such pressure upon Voluntary Schools that we see that, within a measurable time, they will be compelled to strike their colours, and the Board Schools will in the vast majority of cases be substituted for them." They have no right to say they have a vested interest in any such system. They have no such vested interest. We have a claim to come forward, and say that in the interests of the old arrangement, be it good or bad, that was come to with the consent of the Nonconformists themselves. ["No!"] Do not let it be supposed that the compromise of 1870 was a favour to Churchmen. Like all compromises, it took from both sides something which both sides valued, and which, in my judgment, they had a right to value. ["Hear, hear!"] Such as it was, we come forward and, in the interests of that compromise, say, We have a right to keep alive that which in 1870 was regarded by the authors of the Bill of 1870 as an essential part of our national system of education. [*Cheers.*] And then comes forward the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the Hawick Burghs, who attempts to thrust Scotland down our throats. He, never having read the Church Catechism in his life—[*laughter*]—talks as if it was a document directed against Nonconformists. Sir, let me tell the hon. and learned Gentleman that before he comes down and compares the denominationalism which universally, or almost universally, prevails in Scotland with the only denominationalism which the English Church desires to see in England, he ought to compare the Shorter Catechism taught in the Scottish Schools with the English Catechism in English Church Schools—[*cheers*]—and I am confident that, whatever other result is borne in upon his mind in that comparison, he will not come to the conclusion that the English document is the more dogmatic of the two. ["Hear, hear!"] I do not think anybody who reads with impartiality the English Catechism—excluded from every English Board School, although the Scotch Shorter Catechism is permitted in every Scotch school—will find that the English Catechism compares with its Scotch companion in the dogmatic character of its teaching. ["Hear, hear!"] I need say nothing more upon this Bill, on which it has been my fortune so often to address the House. I desire to make no undue claim on its behalf. I admit now, as I have admitted throughout, in the first place, that it is a modest Bill. I admit it does not do all that those interested in Voluntary Schools desire to see done. I admit that what it does is insufficient to meet the case. I grant all that. In the second place, I am also prepared to admit that the Measure is not only a modest Measure, but that it is an experimental Measure. [*Opposition cheers.*] The success of the experiment depends only, in the first instance, upon the skill, or want of skill, as hon. Gentlemen opposite perhaps think, in the drafting and the framing of the Measure, and only, in a secondary success, upon the action of the Education Department. Its success depends primarily and essentially upon the action which the Voluntary School managers themselves are prepared to take in putting the Act in force. I still cherish, after all these Debates, and after, I hope, an impartial consideration of all the criticisms addressed to me from both sides of the House—whether from those who are represented by my two noble Friends the Member for Rochester and the Member for Greenwich on the one side, or those represented by Gentlemen opposite on the other—the hope that, if the managers of the Voluntary Schools will set themselves to work in a spirit, not of separatism or of isolation, but with regard to a common good and a common object, to use for the best advantage this not inconsiderable grant which the State is now giving them, it will prove not insufficient to meet the great and, I grant, the growing needs of our Voluntary Schools. [*Cheers.*] If my prophecies, perhaps my optimistic prophecies, are fulfilled, and if the managers of these Voluntary Schools, to whatever denomination they may belong, set themselves to work in this broad and liberal spirit to deal with the advantages we are now conferring upon them, I am convinced not merely that a great deal, perhaps enough, will have been done permanently to preserve as an element in our great educational system the Voluntary Schools of this country, but that we shall have performed not an inconsiderable work in improving the education in our elementary schools, both in country and in urban districts, that education on which such high hopes are built on both sides of the House, and which, whether they are destined to be realised or not, every one must admit are calculated to produce immense benefit to the children, not merely of Churchmen, of Roman Catholics, of Wesleyans, or other sectarian bodies, but of the whole body of children to whatever communion their parents may belong. [*Cheers.*] These seem to me to be sufficient reasons why the House, after these long and animated Debates, should affirm by a large majority, so far as we are concerned, at all events, that this Bill should be adopted as a permanent part of our statutes. [*Loud Ministerial cheers.*]

Question put.—The House divided :—Ayes, 331 ; Noes, 133.—(Division List—No. 147—appended).

Bill read the Third time, amidst loud Ministerial cheers, and passed.

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Aird, John
Allan, William (Gateshead)
Allhusen, Augustus Henry Eden
Ambrose, William (Middlesex)
Arnold, Alfred
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Ashmead-Bartlett, Sir Ellis
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Austin, M. (Limerick, W.)
Baden-Powell, Sir Geo. Smyth
Bagot, Capt. Josceline FitzRoy
Bailey, James (Walworth)
Baillie, James E. B. (Inverness)
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Alfred
Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J. (Manch'r)
Balfour, Gerald William (Leeds)
Barry, A. H. Smith- (Hunts.)
Bartley, George C. T.
Bass, Hamar
Bathurst, Hon. Allen Benjamin
Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir M. H. (Bristol)
Beach, W. W. Bramston (Hants.)
Beckett, Ernest William
Begg, Ferdinand Faithfull
Bemrose, Henry Howe
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Bethell, Commander
Bhownaggree, M. M.
Bigham, John Charles
Bigwood, James
Bill, Charles
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bond, Edward
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith-
Boulnois, Edmund
Bousfield, William Robert
Bowles, Major H. F. (Middlesex)
Brassey, Albert
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Brookfield, A. Montagu
Bucknill, Thomas Townsend
Butcher, John George
Campbell, James A.
Carlile, William Walter
Cavendish, R. F. (N. Lancs.)
Cavendish, V. C. W. (Derbyshire)
Cayzer, Charles William
Cecil, Lord Hugh
Chaloner, Captain R. G. W.
Chamberlain, Rt. Hon. J. (Birm.)
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Charrington, Spencer

Chelsea, Viscount
Clare, Octavius Leigh
Clarke, Sir Edward (Plymouth)
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
Colomb, Sir John Charles Ready
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Cooke, C. W. Radcliffe (Heref'd)
Cox, Robert
Cranborne, Viscount
Crean, Eugene
Crilly, Daniel
Cripps, Charles Alfred
Cross, Herb. Shepherd (Bolton)
Curran, Thomas (Sligo, S.)
Curzon,Rt.Hn.G.N.(Lanc.S.W.)
Curzon, Viscount (Bucks)
Dalbiac, Major Philip Hugh
Dalkeith, Earl of
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Daly, James
Darling, Charles John
Davenport, W. Bromley
Davitt, Michael
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Digby, John K. D. Wingfield-
Dillon, John
Dixon-Hartland,SirFred. Dixon
Donelan, Captain A.
Doogan, P. C.
Dorington, Sir John Edward
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Douglas-Pennant, Hon. E. S.
Doxford, William Theodore
Drage, Geoffery
Drucker, A.
Duncombe, Hon. Hubert V.
Dyke, Rt. Hon.SirWilliam Hart
Edwards, Gen. Sir James Bevan
Fardell, Thomas George
Farrell, James P. (Cavan, W.)
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edward
Fergusson,Rt.Hn.SirJ. (Manch.)
Field, Admiral (Eastbourne)
Fielden, Thomas
Finch, George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fisher, William Hayes
Fison, Frederick William
FitzGerald, Sir R. U. Penrose
Fitz Wygram, General Sir F.
Flannery, Fortescue
Flavin, Michael Joseph
Fletcher, Sir Henry
Flower, Ernest
Flynn, James Christopher
Folkestone, Viscount
Forster, Henry William
Foster, Harry S. (Suffolk)
Fowler, Matthew (Durham)
Fry, Lewis
Galloway, William Johnson
Garfit, William
Gedge, Sydney
Gibbs,Hn.A.G.H.(CityofLond.)
Giles, Charles Tyrrell
Gilliat, John Saunders
Godson, Augustus Frederick
Goldsworthy, Major-General
Gordon, John Edward
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir John Eldon
Goschen, Rt. Hn.G.J.(St.G'rges)
Goschen, George J. (Sussex)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Graham, Henry Robert
Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
Green,WalfordD.(Wednesbury)
Greene, Henry D. (Shrewsbury)
Greene, W. Raymond- (Cambs.)
Gretton, John
Greville, Captain
Gull, Sir Cameron
Gunter, Colonel
Halsey, Thomas Frederick
Hamilton, Rt. Hon. Lord Geo.
Hanbury, Rt. Hon. Robert Wm.
Hardy, Laurence
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Havelock-Allan, General Sir H.
Heath, James
Heaton, John Henniker
Helder, Augustus
Hermon-Hodge, Robert Trotter
Hoare, Edw.Brodie(Hampstead)
Hoare, Samuel (Norwich)
Hobhouse, Henry
Hogan, James Francis
Holland, Hon. Lionel Raleigh
Hornby, William Henry
Houldsworth, Sir Wm. Henry
Howard, Joseph
Howell, William Tudor
Howorth, Sir Henry Hoyle
Hozier, James Henry Cecil
Hubbard, Hon. Evelyn
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Hutchinson, Capt. G.W. Grice-
Hutton, John (Yorks, N.R.)
Isaacson, Frederick Wootton
Jebb, Richard Claverhouse
Jeffreys, Arthur Frederick
Jessel, Captain Herbert Merton
Johnston, William (Belfast)
Jolliffe, Hon. H. George
Kemp, George
Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir John H.
Kenny, William
Kenrick, William
Kenyon, James
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. William
Kimber, Henry
King, Sir Henry Seymour
Lafone, Alfred
Laurie, Lieut.-General
Lawrence, Edwin (Cornwall)
Lawson, John Grant (Yorks)
Lecky, William Edward H.
Legh, Hon. Thomas W. (Lanc.)
Leigh-Bennett, Henry Currie
Leighton, Stanley
Llewelyn,Sir Dillwyn-(Sw'ns'a)
Lockwood, Lt.-Col. A.R.(Essex)
Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
Long, Col. CharlesW.(Evesh'm)
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (L'pool)
Lopes, Henry Yarde Buller
Lorne, Marquess of
Lowles, John
Loyd, Archie Kirkman
Lucas-Shadwell, William
Lyttelton, Hon. Alfred
Macaleese, Daniel
Macartney, W. G. Ellison
Macdona, John Cumming
Maclean, James Mackenzie
Maclure, John William
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
M'Calmont, H. L. B. (Cambs)
M'Calmont,Maj.-Gen.(Ant'mN)
McCarthy, Justin
McGhee, Richard
M'Hugh, Patrick A. (Leitrim)
McIver, Sir Lewis
McKillop, James
Malcolm, Ian
Manners, Lord Edward Wm.J.
Marks, Henry Hananel
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Massey-Mainwaring, Hn. W. F.
Maxwell, Sir Herbert E.
Mellor, Colonel (Lancashire)
Melville, Beresford Valentine
Milbank, Powlett Charles John
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Milner, Sir Frederick George
Milward, Colonel Victor
Monckton, Edward Philip
Monk, Charles James
Montagu, Sir S. (Whitechapel)
Moon, Edward Robert Pacy
Morgan, Hon. F. (Monm'thsh.)
Morrell, George Herbert
Mount, William George
Muntz, Philip A.
Murdoch, Charles Townshend
Murnaghan, George
Murray,Rt.Hn.A.Graham(Bute)
Murray, Charles J. (Coventry)
Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
Myers, William Henry
Nicol, Donald Ninian
Northcote, Hon. Sir H. Stafford
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Brien, P. J. (Tipperary)
O'Connor, Arthur (Donegal)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Kelly, James
O'Malley, William
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
Parkes, Ebenezer
Parnell, John Howard
Pease, Arthur (Darlington)
Pender, James
Penn, John
Phillpotts, Captain Arthur
Pierpoint, Robert
Pinkerton, John
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Plunkett, Hon. Horace Curzon
Pollock, Harry Frederick
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Power, Patrick Joseph
Pretyman, Capt. Ernest George
Pryce-Jones, Edward
Purvis, Robert
Pym, C. Guy
Quilter, William Cuthbert
Rankin, James
Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
Renshaw, Charles Bine
Richardson, Thomas
Ridley, Rt. Hn. Sir Matthew W
Ritchie, Rt. Hon. Chas.Thomson
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
Round, James
Russell, Gen. F.S. (Cheltenham)

Russell, Sir George (Berksh.)
Russell, T. W. (Tyrone)
Samuel, Harry S. (Limehouse)
Saunderson, Col. Edw. James
Savory, Sir Joseph
Scoble, Sir Andrew Richard
Seely, Charles Hilton
Seton-Karr, Henry
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (Renfrew)
Sidebottom, William (Derbysh.)
Skewes-Cox, Thomas
Smith, Abel (Herts)
Smith, Abel H. (Christchurch)
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Spencer, Ernest
Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
Stanley, Edw. Jas. (Somerset)
Stanley, Henry M. (Lambeth)
Stewart, Sir Mark J. McTaggart
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Strauss, Arthur
Strutt, Hon. Charles Hedley
Sturt, Hon. Humphry Napier
Sullivan, Donal (Westmeath)
Sullivan, T. D. (Donegal, W.)
Sutherland, Sir Thomas
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot, John G. (Oxford Univ.)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tollemache, Henry James
Tomlinson, Wm. Edw. Murray
Valentia, Viscount
Verney, Hon. Richard Greville
Vincent, Col. Sir C. E. Howard
Wanklyn, James Leslie
Warde, Lt.-Col. C. E. (Kent)
Warr, Augustus Frederick
Webster, R. G. (St. Pancras)
Webster, Sir R. E. (Isle of Wight)
Welby, Lieut.-Col. A. C. E.
Wentworth, Bruce C. Vernon-
Wharton, John Lloyd
Whiteley, George (Stockport)
Whiteley, H. (Ashton-under-L.)
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Williams, Colonel R. (Dorset)
Williams, Joseph Powell (Bir.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Willox, John Archibald
Wilson-Todd, Wm. H. (Yorks)
Wodehouse, Edmond R. (Bath)
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Wylie, Alexander
Wyndham, George
Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.
Wyvill, Marmaduke D'Arcy
Younger, William

TELLERS FOR THE AYES, Mr. Anstruther and Lord Arthur Hill.

NOES.

Acland, Rt. Hon. A. H. Dyke
Allen, Wm. (Newc.under Lyme)
Allison, Robert Andrew
Arch, Joseph
Asher, Alexander
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Atherley-Jones, L.
Austin, Sir John (Yorkshire)
Bainbridge, Emerson
Baker, Sir John
Balfour, Rt. Hn. J. Blair (Clackm.
Barlow, John Emmott
Bayley, Thomas (Derbyshire)
Beaumont, Wentworth C. B.
Billson, Alfred
Birrell, Augustine
Bolton, Thomas Dolling
Brigg, John
Broadhurst, Henry
Brunner, Sir John Tomlinson
Bryce, Rt. Hon. James
Burt, Thomas
Buxton, Sydney Charles
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Sir Charles (Glasgow)
Cameron, Robert (Durham)
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
Carmichael, Sir T. D. Gibson-
Causton, Richard Knight
Channing, Francis Allston
Clark, Dr. G. B. (Caithness-shire)
Clough, Walter Owen
Colville, John
Cozens-Hardy, Herbert Hardy
Crombie, John William
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, M. Vaughan- (Cardigan)
Davies, W. Rees- (Pembrokesh.)
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dixon, George
Dunn, Sir William
Evans, Samuel T. (Glamorgan)
Evans, Sir Francis H. (South'ton)
Evershed, Sydney
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Fenwick, Charles
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (Leith)
Foster, Sir Walter (Derby Co.)
Fowler, Rt. Hn. Sir H. (Wol'tn)
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gold, Charles
Gourley, Sir Edward Temperley
Griffith, Ellis J.
Haldane, Richard Burdon
Harrison, Charles
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Charles Seale-
Hazell, Walter
Hedderwick, Thomas Charles H.
Holburn, J. G.
Holden, Angus
Horniman, Frederick John
Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
Hutton, Alfred E. (Morley)
Joicey, Sir James
Jones, David Brynmor (Swansea)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire)
Kearley, Hudson E.
Labouchere, Henry
Lambert, George
Langley, Batty
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (Cumb'land)
Leng, Sir John
Leuty, Thomas Richmond
Lewis, John Herbert
Lockwood, Sir Frank (York)
Logan, John William
Lough, Thomas
McEwan, William
McKenna, Reginald
Maden, John Henry
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morley, Charles (Breconshire)
Morley, Rt. Hn. John (Montrose)
Mundella, Rt. Hn. Anthony John
Norton, Captain Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Oldroyd, Mark
Owen, Thomas
Paulton, James Mellor
Pease, Joseph A. (Northumb.)
Pease, Sir Joseph W. (Durham
Perks, Robert William
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pirie, Captain Duncan Vernon
Price, Robert John
Priestley, Briggs (Yorks.)
Provand, Andrew Dryburgh
Randell, David
Reckitt, Harold James
Rickett, J. Compton
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robson, William Snowdon
Samuel, J. (Stockton-on-Tees)
Schwann, Charles E.
Scott, Charles Prestwich
Shaw, Thomas (Hawick B.)
Smith, Samuel (Flint)
Souttar, Robinson
Spicer, Albert
Stevenson, Francis S.
Strachey, Edward
Stuart, James (Shoreditch)
Tennant, Harold John
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thomas, Alfred (Glamorgan, E.)
Ure, Alexander
Wallace, Robert (Edinburgh)
Wallace, Robert (Perth)
Walton, John Lawson
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Williams, John Carvell (Notts.)
Wills, Sir William Henry
Wilson, Frederick W. (Norfolk)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Woodall, William
Woodhouse, Sir J. T. (Hud'rsf'ld)
Woods, Samuel
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES, Mr. Thomas Ellis and Mr. McArthur

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No 1) BILL.

Read the Third time, and Passed.

MILITARY WORKS (MONEY) BILL.

Third Reading deferred till Monday next.

MILITARY LANDS ACT (1892) AMENDMENT BILL.

Considered in Committee :—

Clause 1,—

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

PUBLIC OFFICES (WHITEHALL) SITE BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

PUBLIC HEALTH (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Second Reading [22nd March] further adjourned till Monday next.

MERCHANT SHIPPING (UNDERMANNING) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

FOREIGN PRISON MADE GOODS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

BERRIEW SCHOOL BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

KINGSTOWN HARBOUR ROADS TRANSFER BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

LAW OF EVIDENCE (CRIMINAL CASES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ALDERSHOT AND FARNBOROUGH) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

ARCHDEACONRY OF CORNWALL BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

TRUSTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Third Reading deferred till Monday next.

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY (TRANSFER OF PATRONAGE) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

RAILWAY ASSESSORS (SCOTLAND) SUPERANNUATION BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

SMALLER DWELLINGS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday, 11th May.

LAND LAW (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

MIDWIVES' REGISTRATION BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday, 8th April.

COUNTY COUNCILS' (QUALIFICATION OF WOMEN) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday next.

TRUCK ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday next.

STEAM ENGINES AND BOILERS (PERSONS IN CHARGE) BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Motion for Committal to Standing Committee on Trade, etc. [17th February] further adjourned till Monday next.

COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEAL BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Motion for Committal to Select Committee [24th March] further Adjourned till To-morrow.

COUNTY GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

LEASEHOLDERS' (PURCHASE OF FEE SIMPLE) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday, 14th April.

SEA FISHERIES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday, 12th April.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS (IRELAND) (WOMEN) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

LICENSING EXEMPTION (HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

MOTIONS.

APPEAL IN CERTAIN CIVIL MATTERS (IRELAND).

Bill to provide for an Appeal in Ireland in Cases stated by Justices in Certain Civil Matters, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Attorney General for Ireland and Mr. Gerald Balfour; presented, and Read the First time; to be Read a Second time upon Tuesday, 6th April, and to be printed.—[Bill 176.]

COUNTY SECRETARIES SUPERANNUATION (IRELAND).

Bill to enable Grand Juries in Ireland to grant Superannuation Allowances to County Secretaries, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Horace Plunkett, Mr. Carson, and Mr. Butcher; presented and Read the First time; to be Read a Second time upon Wednesday 7th April, and to be printed.—[Bill 177.]

GOVERNMENT OFFICES (APPROPRIATION OF SITES).

Select Committee appointed to inquire into and report upon the manner in which the Sites available for the erection of the new buildings required for Government Offices may best be appropriated for that purpose.

The Committee was accordingly nominated of—Mr. Smith-Barry, Mr. John Burns, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Akers-Douglas, Mr. Herbert Gladstone, Sir James Kitson, Mr. Legh, Sir Herbert Maxwell, Mr. Molloy, Sir Stafford Northcote, and Mr. Whitmore.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.—(*Mr. Anstruther.*)

And, it being One of the Clock, Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put.

House adjourned at One o'Clock

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Sp[illegible]h ind[illegible]ates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, 26th March 1897.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

Brought from the Commons; Read 1^a; and (Standing Orders Nos. XXXIX. and XLV. having been suspended) Read 2^a; Committee negatived; Bill Read 3^a, and passed.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS BILL.

Brought from the Commons; Read 1^a; to be printed; and to be Read 2^a on Tuesday next. [The Lord President, *D. Devonshire*].—(No. 37.)

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

Read 3^a (according to Order), and passed.

POST OFFICE CONSOLIDATION BILL [H.L.].

House in Committee (according to Order); the Amendment proposed by the Joint Committee made; Standing Committee negatived; the Report of Amendment to be received on Monday next.

LAND TRANSFER BILL [H.L.].

House in Committee (according to Order); Bill reported without Amendment; and re-committed to the Standing Committee.

House Adjourned at Twenty-five Minutes before Five o'Clock, to Monday next, a Quarter before Eleven o'Clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 26th March 1897.

EDUCATIONAL ENDOWMENTS (IRELAND) ACT 1885 (LIMERICK, KILLALOE, AND KILFENORA DIOCESAN SCHOOL).

The COMPTROLLER of the HOUSEHOLD (Lord Arthur Hill) reported Her Majesty's answer to the Humble Address of the 8th March as followeth:—

"I have received your Address praying that I will withhold my consent from paragraph 5 of Scheme No. 90, Supplemental, framed by the Educational Endowments Commissioners, relating to the Endowment heretofore belonging to the Limerick, Killaloe, and Kilfenora Diocesan School, which provides for sale by public auction of the premises known as the Roxborough Road School, held by the Rev. James Fitzgerald Gregg, and to disapprove of any part of the said Supplemental Scheme which will operate to have the said premises sold without giving to the said Rev. James Fitzgerald Gregg a right of pre-emption of the said premises or payment of compensation for his expenditure thereon and disturbance therein.

"I will comply with your advice."

THOMPSON'S DIVORCE BILL [H.L.].

Read the Third Time, and passed without Amendment.

QUESTIONS.

MILITIA OFFICERS.

*Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War what was the deficiency of Militia Officers at the latest date for which Returns exist; and what was the deficiency 12 months earlier?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford): The deficiency of the Militia in officers on March 20, 1896, was 591, and on the same day this year it was 641.

AGRICULTURAL RATING ACT, 1896.

Mr. JAMES DALY (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he has received a resolution from the Carrickmacross Town Commissioners, requesting the Government to extend to Ireland the provisions of the Agricultural Rating Act passed last Session for England; and (2) what steps he intends taking to carry out the terms of the resolution referred to?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. Gerald Balfour, Leeds, Central): The resolution referred to has been received. As to the second paragraph, I have nothing to add to my former replies to similar questions on the subject.

ARMY MOBILISATION (HOME DEFENCE).

COLONEL WELBY (Taunton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War if he could state to the House the names of the Officers detailed to command Army Corps, Divisions, and Brigades in the Field Army for Home Defence, consisting of three Army Corps and four Cavalry Brigades, as laid down in Mobilisation Tables 1892?

MR. BRODRICK: The names of Officers for the Staff of Corps, Divisions, and Brigades in case of mobilisation are recorded at the War Office; but it would be highly inconvenient to make it public, and we cannot possibly undertake to do so.

RAILWAYS (CO. CAVAN).

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury (1) whether he is aware that, in consequence of the high prices of the Cavan and Leitrim Railway stock, it has been found impossible to avail of the provisions of the Tramways (Ireland) Act, 1895; and (2) whether, in view of the very heavy burden put upon the ratepayers of the poorest district in county Cavan to find the money which pays the guaranteed dividend, he will advise the Treasury to make a grant in aid so as to relieve their liability for previous Government contribution?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. R. W. HANBURY, Preston): As I said in reply to the hon. Member's Question on the 4th February, it has been found impossible to adopt these provisions with advantage to the ratepayers and shareholders. I do not understand the second paragraph. Instead of throwing burdens on the Cavan ratepayers, the Government has assisted them by refunding two per cent. of their guarantee on £47,000, and has also relieved them of a further charge of £96 a year by the cancellation of shares in a manner which I explained in my answer to the hon. Member for South Leitrim on the 20th July last. The Treasury has no funds at its disposal out of which any further assistance could be given.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can hold out any hopes whatever of Government assistance for the construction of the three short lines of railways projected last year in county Cavan, concerning which memorials were laid before him?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I am afraid the Government can hold out no hope that they will be able to assist the construction of these lines out of the moneys provided by the Act of last year.

GUN LICENCE (BALLYBUNION, CO. KERRY).

MR. M. J. FLAVIN (Kerry, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutentant of Ireland (1) if he is aware that the application of John H. Danagher, of Ballybunion, for a transfer of a gun licence, was refused at the Petty Sessions held in Ballybunion, county Kerry, on the 14th August, 1896; if so, on what grounds; (2) whether he is aware that the applicant is a man of high character, as was shown by his being recommended for the position of Assistant Land Commissioner, by requisition signed by the most influential inhabitants in the county Limerick; and (3) whether an Inquiry will be instituted with a view of granting the gun licence for the protection of the land which the applicant holds?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The question of granting or withholding a licence to keep fire-arms is vested by law in the Resident Magistrate, who is the licensing officer of the district, and it would be contrary to practice to state the grounds on which the application for a licence was refused in the present or any other case. It is a fact that the applicant was a candidate for appointment to the office mentioned in the second paragraph.

EVICTED TENANTS (CO. MONAGHAN, IRELAND).

MR. DALY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he is aware that 35 evicted tenants from the Shirley Estate, county Monaghan, have made application to the Irish Land Commissioners to purchase the holdings from which they were evicted, under The Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1896, Part V., and that Mr. Shirley, the landlord, has refused to join the tenants in their applications to purchase; (2) whether he is aware that about the time of the eviction of these tenants reductions were made on the Shirley property of over 40 per cent. by the Sub-Commissioners to tenants who were able to enter the Land Courts; and (3) whether, under these circumstances, he will devise means of reinstating the tenants mentioned?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: The facts are correctly stated in the first paragraph. I have no information as to the second paragraph, and as regards the last paragraph, if the suggestion of the hon. Member is that there should be further legislation for the purpose of promoting settlements with evicted tenants, I have to say it is not the intention of the Government to undertake such further legislation.

SCOTTISH PROVIDENT ASSURANCE COMPANY.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state whether the Scottish Provident Assurance Company has taken any steps in the Land Commission Court to dispose of the lands which they hold as mortgagees in possession in county Longford?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: The answer to this Question is in the negative.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES (CO. CAVAN).

Mr. S. YOUNG (Cavan, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware of the numerous complaints made by the labourers of Cootehill, county Cavan, in regard to the want of cottages; whether he is aware that last August the Local Government Board, after inquiry, ordered six cottages to be erected, since which time nothing has been heard of them; and whether he will take steps to facilitate their erection, in view of the sanitary condition of the people?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: The Inspector of the Local Government Board is carrying out the Labourers Acts in this Union consequent on the refusal of the sanitary authority to do so. The Board's Provisional Order authorising the erection of six cottages became absolute on the 24th November last. The loans have since been sanctioned by the Treasury, and arbitration proceedings to determine the amount of compensation payable for the lands are now pending. No delay that can possibly be avoided will be permitted to take place in the matter.

ARTILLERY AND CAVALRY HORSES.

Captain JESSEL (St. Pancras, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether he can state the estimated amount saved to the public by the new scheme of cavalry regiments leaving their horses behind when proceeding from England to Ireland and vice versa; and whether this scheme will be carried out in the case of batteries moving in relief; and if so, what would be the total saving?

Mr. BRODRICK: Batteries moving between England and Ireland will not take any horses; but as regards cavalry regiments, it is only intended to leave behind the old horses and the latest remounts, say 25 to 30 per cent. of the strength. The financial result, taking one year with another, is expected to be a saving of about £500 a year.

ARMY RESERVISTS.

Captain JESSEL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War if it is proposed to extend to the whole of the Army the privilege, proposed to be given to the Guards, of allowing increased facilities to Reservists to rejoin for service with the colours?

Mr. BRODRICK: It has been determined for the present to allow a limited number of men who have left the Brigade of Guards with three years colour service to return to the colours. There are no three years' men in the line reserve, and the same reasons do not exist in the line as in the Guards for allowing Reservists to rejoin.

NAVAL HOSPITALS.

Sir JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether Captain Byrne, Royal Marine Light Infantry (since dead), was brought from Portsmouth to be treated at St. Thomas's Hospital for gunshot wounds received in action at Benin, because the Royal Naval Hospital, Haslar, is not supplied with the necessary apparatus for examination by the Röntgen rays; and if he will take the necessary steps to cause the chief naval hospitals to be furnished with the necessary appliances for the examination of wounds and for the scientific education of the surgeons of the Royal Navy?

The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Goschen, St. George's, Hanover Square): Captain Byrne, a most able officer, whose death is deeply to be deplored—["Hear, hear!"]—went to St. Thomas's Hospital for treatment for a gunshot wound, at his own request, expressed almost immediately after his arrival on board the hospital ship *Malacca* on 26th February. This wish he reiterated most strongly on his arrival at Portsmouth. It has, so I am informed, no connection with the question of the examination of his wound by Röntgen ray apparatus. ["Hear, hear!"] The development of this new science is being closely followed by the naval medical authorities, and care will be taken, as assured *data* are obtained, to supply the naval hospitals with all necessary appliances. The naval hospitals are now authorised to have ray radiographs taken when necessary.

ST. STEPHEN'S SCHOOL, LEWISHAM.

Lord HUGH CECIL (Greenwich): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he is aware that the school of St. Stephen's, Lewisham, has suffered a serious temporary diminution of attendance, owing to the fear of infectious disease; whether the managers of the school acted in accordance with the regulations of the Department in keeping it open in spite of what was an unreasonable panic; whether, seeing that the school will suffer severely in its grant in consequence, and that under Article 101 of the Code, had it been closed, the period in which it was so closed would not have been reckoned in calculating the attendance, the Education Department can discriminate in favour of a school in this position and allow them the full grant; and whether, if the Department have no such power, they will consider the propriety of applying to Parliament to extend their discretion in the matter?

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Sir J. Gorst, Cambridge University): The facts are as stated, but the Committee of Council have no power to exercise the discretion suggested. The case is very exceptional, but the matter will be considered in connection with next year's Code.

IRISH MAIL SERVICE

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Tipperary, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, if, when examining into the circumstances in connection with the acceleration of the mail service to Roscrea, Nenagh, Birr, and districts, as promised, he will be pleased to take into consideration the proposal that these mail bags should be put out from the morning mail at Ballybrophy Junction, and sent on by goods train leaving there, on the ground that such an arrangement if carried out would answer all the purposes required for the places in question; and if the Railway Company will be requested to make this arrangement?

Mr. HANBURY: The Postmaster General will take into consideration the proposal referred to by the hon. Member, and a communication on the subject shall be made to the Railway Company.

PROHIBITED MEETING (IRELAND).

Mr. JOHN DILLON (Mayo, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland under what Statute the meeting at Knox was prohibited on Sunday last; who swore the informations; what means were taken to inform the people that the meeting was proclaimed; and whether the proclamation of a meeting in Ireland confers a right on the police to attack and disperse groups of people assembled at very considerable distances from the place where the meeting was announced to be held?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: The Crown has the right under the common law, not under Statute, as part of the administration of preventive justice, to prohibit any meeting called for an illegal object, or which, by reason of the circumstances of terror and alarm attending it, becomes an unlawful assembly, or where it is believed on reasonable grounds that its prohibition is necessary to prevent the public peace and tranquillity of the district from being endangered. All these elements entered in the present instance. An information was sworn, and, according to the invariable practice, I must decline to state by whom. A proclamation *per se* confers no rights on anybody; it merely serves as a warning. There was no proclamation issued in the present case, but the promoters of the meeting were fully warned that it would not be permitted, and the orders given to the police covered the case of every meeting attempted to be held in the neighbourhood.

Mr. DILLON asked whether any steps were taken to convey the information to the people who were attacked by the police and dispersed, and also whether the so-called proclamation was known to the common law?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. The last question does not arise.

Captain DONELAN (Cork, E.) asked whether it was intended to revive the Coercion Act in Ireland?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: I have no reason to believe that the meeting was dispersed without the people being fully cognizant of the fact that it would not be permitted to be held, and therefore I think that the fact that there was no proclamation in this case would not cause any inconvenience to arise. In answer to the hon. Member for Cork I have to state that there is no intention of reviving the Coercion Act in Ireland. [" Hear, hear! "]

Mr. DILLON said that the right hon. Gentleman had not answered his question. What he asked was why were no steps taken to bring to the knowledge of the people the fact that the meeting was prohibited, and the right hon. Gentleman's answer was that he had no reason to know that they were not warned. Had the right hon. Gentleman any reason to know that they were warned.

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: I have already informed the hon. Gentleman that the leaders of the meeting received full information that the meeting would not be permitted.

CRETE.

Mr. DILLON: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what precautions the Government have taken to insure that the Christian peasantry of Crete shall not be subjected to famine by the blockade; and on what grounds the Government justify the 3rd article of the proclamation, which forbids the landing of provisions for the interior of the island, while no restriction is placed on the landing of provisions and stores for the use of those cities where the Mahommedan population and the Turkish troops are congregated?

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it is not a fact that the Christian insurgents are now in possession of the lands, the homes, the property, and the goods of the Mahommedan population, which they have taken from them by force?

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I wish they were.

*The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. G. Curzon, Lancashire, Southport): I do not think I could undertake to answer that on the spur of the moment. In answer to the Question on the Paper I have to say that no reply has as yet been received from the British Admiral to the communication addressed to him on the subject; but we gather from other reports that this question of provisions for the population of the island is one which is engaging the earnest attention of the Admirals.

Mr. MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs a Question, of which I have given him private notice—whether the number of Christians murdered at Tokat amounted not to 100, but 700?

*Mr. CURZON: No, Sir. The number that was reported to us was "at least 100." We have not heard of 700 or of a larger number.

Mr. J. C. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether a proposal for the contemporaneous withdrawal of Greek and Turkish troops from Crete is under consideration by the Powers; and, if not, will the representative of Her Majesty's Government urge upon the other Powers, in the interests of peace, the propriety of this step being taken?

*MR. CURZON: The Powers have already summoned the Greek Government to withdraw their troops from Crete, but this demand has not so far been complied with. Under these circumstances the Governments of the Great Powers are not likely to entertain any proposals for the contemporaneous withdrawal of Greek and Turkish troops. The question of the withdrawal of the Turkish troops is under separate consideration, and Her Majesty's Government have urged that it should take place with as little delay as possible.

NAVAL INTERPRETERS.

CAPTAIN PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if he could state to the House how many Officers of the Royal Navy, apart from the Royal Marines, are qualified as interpreters, and in what languages?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: Thirty-five naval officers are qualified as interpreters in European languages—namely, 1 Russian, 4 German, 21 French, 5 Spanish, 4 Italian; and 85 in Oriental languages—namely, 40 Hindustani, 9 Persian, 6 Arabic, 30 Swahili. One officer has recently passed provisionally in modern Greek.

CAPTAIN DONELAN asked if any of the Officers were serving on British ships at Crete?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: I have not looked into the names, but the last-mentioned Officer is there.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) asked whether the large number who had qualified in Swahili had been duly examined by the Civil Service Commissioners? [*Laughter.*]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: I am not sure that the Civil Service Commissioners would be the most competent authorities. [*Renewed laughter.*]

Mr. J. C. Flynn.

MASSACRE AT TOKAT.

MR. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in reference to the recent massacre of Armenians at Tokat and the pillage of the town, whether effective steps will be taken by the Great Powers (with a view to the prevention of further massacre and outrage) to apply to Turkey the same coercive measures which are now contemplated in regard to Greece?

*MR. CURZON: I confess that I cannot discover any parallel between the two situations. In the case of Tokat the Great Powers have addressed demands to the Turkish Government, which have so far been complied with. In the case of Crete the Greek Government has refused to comply with the demands of the Powers. Hence the blockade.

COUNTY COURTS AND SUB-SHERIFFS (IRELAND).

MR. JASPER TULLY (Leitrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Dublin Mercantile Association have made frequent complaints to the Lord Chancellor as to the unsatisfactory state of the Law in Ireland relating to the recovery of debts in undefended cases in the county courts, and have asked that the office of sub-sheriff in the different counties should be brought directly under the control of the court, and the office made a permanent one similar to that of the high bailiff in England; and whether he can state if the Irish Government are prepared to take steps to remedy the matters complained of?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The Dublin Mercantile Association has made representations to the Lord Chancellor in reference to the matters stated in the Question, and those representations are under consideration.

LAW (CODIFICATION).

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, as a memorial of Her Majesty's Great Jubilee, the Government will appoint a Commission to undertake the codification and simplification of the Laws of England?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (MR. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I am afraid I cannot promise that this enormous undertaking shall be started at the present time. It is an ideal which many law reformers have endeavoured to progress for generations past, but I cannot myself undertake to contribute to its fulfilment.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Will the right hon. Gentleman make an effort?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: If consulting my legal Friends in this or the other House can be regarded as making an effort, I shall be prepared to do that.

WALLACE COLLECTION (BEQUEST TO NATION).

MR. W. F. B. MASSEY-MAINWARING (Finsbury, Central): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury when he will make his promised statement respecting the terms attached by the late Lady Wallace to her gift of the Wallace Collection to the Nation. Is the gentleman now examining the collection acting on behalf of the Government, and what are his instructions; and, will the First Lord of the Treasury undertake that if it is proposed by the Government to make a selection from the whole collection bequeathed, such selection shall not be placed in the hands of any one individual, but shall be made by a competent committee of twelve persons?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: My hon. Friend has put this Question under some misconception as to the facts. The answer will be long, but perhaps it would be convenient that I should read out the terms of the bequest, which really govern the whole transaction. The bequest to the nation made by a codicil of the Will of the late Lady Wallace is in the following words:—

> "I bequeath to the British nation my pictures, porcelain, bronzes, artistic furniture, armour, miniatures, snuff boxes, and works of art which are placed on the ground and first floors and in the galleries at Hertford House, on the express condition that the Government for the time being shall agree to give a site in a central part of London and build thereon a special museum to contain the said collection, which shall always be kept together unmixed with other objects of arts and shall be styled 'The Wallace Collection'; but this request shall not include personal and modern jewellery, trinkets, and effects, nor ordinary modern furniture or chattels, but shall include the Louis XIV. balustrade at Hertford House, which my executors shall replace by an ordinary modern balustrade, and the said Louis XIV. balustrade shall be used in the new museum to be erected for the said collection. And I hereby declare that if any doubt shall arise as to whether any object shall form part of the collection or not the question shall be determined by my executors and their decision shall be final."

Thus the question whether any object at Hertford House as included in the bequest is to be decided by the executors, and Her Majesty's Government have no power of selection. By the courtesy of the executors, it has been arranged that in the case of any article as to which they themselves feel any doubt, two experts—one nominated by Her Majesty's Government, and one by the executors—shall examine the article, and report their opinion to the executors, with whom the decision rests. Mr. Woods, of the firm of Christie, Manson, and Woods, will act for Her Majesty's Government.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. DILLON asked the First Lord of the Treasury why, in arranging Votes on Account the Vote for the Local Government Board for England No. 16 in Clause 2 was placed first?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: Perhaps the hon. Member will remember that last year, to the universal satisfaction of the House, it was agreed that the Vote on Account should be divided, and that an evening should not be squandered in discussing the comparatively trivial matters which arise on Clause 1. The special application of that principle which I have made this year is based on demands made in all quarters of the House. While last year the discussion of the Votes was, on the whole satisfactory, the Votes which came in for the least discussion were those relating to the great administrative Departments. For this reason I put down three Votes before the others, hoping to satisfy a general demand made on both sides of the House, and thereby to expedite business.

PRISONERS' PERSONAL CORRECTION PROHIBITION BILL.

Second Reading deferred from Tuesday next till Thursday 8th April.

MOTION.

RESTRAINT OF EVICTIONS (LONDON).

Bill to restrain Eviction of Certain Tenants in London until after the date of the Jubilee procession, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Marks, Mr. Harry Samuel, Captain Norton, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Brynmor Jones, Mr. Macdona, Mr. MacNeill, Colonel Dalbiac, Mr. Duncombe, Mr. Faithfull Begg, Colonel Saunderson, and Mr. H. M. Stanley; presented accordingly, amid cheers and laughter, and Read the First time; to be Read a Second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed.—[Bill 178.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY (FOURTH ALLOTTED DAY).

Considered in Committee.

[The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS, Mr. J. W. LOWTHER, in the Chair.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS, 1897-98 (VOTE ON ACCOUNT).

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum not exceeding £10,631,218, be granted to Her Majesty, on account, for or towards defraying the Charges for the following Civil Services and Revenue Departments for the year ending on the 31st day of March 1898, viz:—

CIVIL SERVICES—CLASS II.

	£
Local Government Board	60,000
Home Office and Subordinate Departments	40,000
Stationery Office and Printing	240,000

CLASS I.

	£
Royal Palaces and Marlborough House	12,000
Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens	32,000
Houses of Parliament Buildings	12,000
Admiralty, Extension of Buildings	15,000
Miscellaneous Legal Buildings, Great Britain	24,000
Art and Science Buildings, Great Britain	10,000
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings	8,000
Revenue Department Buildings, Great Britain	120,000
Public Buildings, Great Britain	70,000
Surveys of the United Kingdom	80,000
Harbours, &c., under Board of Trade, and Light Houses Abroad	7,000
Peterhead Harbour	6,000
Rates on Government Property	210,000
Public Works and Buildings, Ireland	70,000
Railways, Ireland	70,000

CLASS II.

United Kingdom and England:—

House of Lords, Offices	6,000
House of Commons, Offices	9,000
Treasury and Subordinate Departments	30,000
Foreign Office	22,000
Colonial Office	14,000
Privy Council Office, &c.	5,000
Board of Trade and Subordinate Departments	57,000
Mercantile Marine Fund, Grant in Aid	15,000
Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade	3
Board of Agriculture	75,000
Charity Commission	14,000
Civil Service Commission	13,000
Exchequer and Audit Department	20,000
Friendly Societies, Registry	2,200
Lunacy Commission	4,500
Mint (including Coinage)	10
National Debt Office	5,000
Public Record Office	8,000
Public Works Loans Commission	2,500
Registrar General's Office	13,000
Woods, Forests, &c., Office of	7,000
Works and Public Buildings, Office of	19,000
Secret Service	1,7000

Scotland:—

Secretary for Scotland	4,000
Fishery Board	8,000
Lunacy Commission	2,000
Registrar General's Office	2,000
Local Government Board	4,000

Ireland:—

Lord Lieutenant's Household	2,000
Chief Secretary and Subordinate Departments	15,000
Charitable Donations and Bequests Office	700
Local Government Board	25,000
Public Record Office	2,000
Public Works Office	12,000
Registrar General's Office	5,500
Valuation and Boundary Survey	6,000

Class III.

United Kingdom and England :—

	£
Law Charges . . .	40,000
Miscellaneous Legal Expenses	18,000
Supreme Court of Judicature	120,000
Land Registry . . .	2,700
County Courts . . .	5,000
Police Courts (London and Sheerness) . . .	1,500
Police, England and Wales	14,000
Prisons, England and the Colonies	180,000
Reformatory and Industrial Schools, Great Britain .	140,000
Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum . . .	10,000

Scotland :—

Law Charges and Courts of Law	30,000
Register House, Edinburgh	13,000
Crofters Commission . .	2,000
Prisons, Scotland . .	30,000

Ireland :—

Law Charges and Criminal Prosecutions . . .	24,000
Supreme Court of Judicature, and other Legal Departments . . .	38,000
Land Commission . .	39,000
County Court Officers, &c. .	36,000
Dublin Metropolitan Police (including Police Courts)	28,000
Constabulary . . .	600,000
Prisons, Ireland . . .	45,000
Reformatory and Industrial Schools	55,000
Dundrum Criminal Lunatic Asylum	2,500

Class IV.

United Kingdom and England :—

Public Education, England and Wales . . .	3,000,000
Science and Art Department, United Kingdom . .	260,000
British Museum . . .	54,000
National Gallery . . .	6,000
National Portrait Gallery .	2,000
Scientific Investigations, &c., United Kingdom .	12,000
Universities and Colleges, Great Britain, and Intermediate Education, Wales	38,000
London University . .	5

Scotland :—

Public Education . .	550,000
National Gallery . .	1,400

Ireland :—

Public Education . .	550,000
Endowed Schools Commissioners . . .	400
National Gallery . .	800
Queen's Colleges . . .	2,500

Class V.

	£
Diplomatic Services and Consular Services . .	200,000
Uganda Central, and East Africa, Protectorates and Uganda Railway . .	44,000
Colonial Services, including South Africa . . .	45,000
Cyprus, Grant in Aid . .	39,000
Slave Trade Services . .	1,500
Subsidies to Telegraph Companies, &c. . .	33,000

Class VI.

Superannuation and Retired Allowances . .	270,000
Merchant Seamen's Fund Pensions, &c. . .	4,000
Miscellaneous Charitable and other Allowances, Great Britain . .	1,000
Pauper Lunatics, Ireland .	120,000
Hospitals and Charities, Ireland . . .	9,000

Class VII.

Temporary Commissions .	12,000
Miscellaneous Expenses .	1,500
Highlands and Islands of Scotland . . .	8,000
Total for Civil Services .	£8,271,218

Revenue Departments.

Customs	90,000
Inland Revenue . . .	180,000
Post Office . . .	900,000
Post Office Packet Service .	190,000
Post Office Telegraphs .	1,000,000
Total for Revenue Departments . .	£2,360,000
Grand Total	£10,631,218

Sir ALBERT ROLLIT (Islington, S.) moved to reduce the vote relating to the Local Government Board by £100. He said he took an early opportunity on this Vote of drawing attention to a matter of some urgency in reference to the proposed sick children's asylum district which had been projected by the President of the Local Government Board, and which formed the subject of the Order which had been circulated among the Boards of Guardians of the Metropolis, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would give some assurance that he would either greatly modify or not proceed with proposals which had been received with alarm by the local authorities in London, and which was especially repugnant to the ratepayers, who believed it would be a means of fastening upon them new and large burdens. He hoped the President of the Local Government Board would be able to make a statement which would assure the Metropolis on the subject. If that were the case there would be no disposition to press the matter hostilely or unduly. On the other hand, unless the statement were explicit, it would become necessary to divide the Committee. In the Report of the Poor Law Schools Committee a desire was expressed for the exclusion, as far as possible, of children from actual life in our workhouses, and for the gradual decrease of what were known as the barrack schools. To bring the children more in contact with home influences was an object which would commend itself to all. At the same time, judging from the Parliamentary Paper just published, even in the case of the experiment in Sheffield of isolated homes, which on the whole seemed to be successful, there were some defects. Before Parliament indorsed the findings of the Poor Law Schools Committee, there should be full and adequate opportunity given for discussing not only its Report, but also the evidence which had been given, because in some cases the Report exaggerated certain statements as to the condition of the schools, and in some respects it was very much in conflict with the evidence which was given. The defect of what was generally an admirable Report was that it proceeded to too great generalities from particular instances. He very much doubted whether one or two casual visits of this character to schools could result in a trustworthy estimate of their general work. With regard to the condemnation of the schools, and the retention of the services of the Guardians, even the Report of the Committee itself was not unanimous, and they had only to read the Minority Reports to feel that the Committee was materially divided even upon vital and essential points. There were two points both in the Report of the Committee and in the proposal of the President of the Local Government Board which he hoped would receive much more attention in Parliament before they were brought into force —namely, the creation of a central authority, and the dismissal, or, at any rate, the limitation of the responsibility of the Guardians, who had hitherto ably supervised the education of the children in these schools. ["Hear, hear!"] There was in the Report, he would not say condemnation of the services of the Guardians, because in some respects they were recognised, but the schools they had administered were declared in general terms not to have been satisfactory, and the standard of education was very strongly condemned. The Local Government Board must not forget that the present and past condition of affairs had been very largely due to its own inaction, and in saying this he did not mean to cast any reflection upon the Board, because he believed, in this and other matters, it had been very greatly overworked and understaffed. He pointed out that for years the Education Inspector had been endeavouring to get the Local Government Board to issue a new order defining the limit of hours, and so forth, but that that had never been accomplished. Other matters also which had not been attended to showed that the Local Government Board itself was very largely responsible for what had happened. He thought it was only just, when discussing the comparative action and inaction of the Local Government Board and the Guardians, that they should pay a tribute to the Guardians for the part which they had taken for many years past in the workhouses and schools, by means of which personal sympathy and help had been given to individuals both in schools and during after-life which could not have been given under a centralised system. The depreciatory remarks which had been made about industrial training were by no means universally applicable. There were many workhouse schools in connection with which the Guardians had done most admirable work. He hoped that under any new scheme the services of the Guardians might be retained. Whatever might be the view of the Royal Commission, he thought it was important to remember that four very able members of the Commission had signed a Minority Report. That Report showed that an able and conscientious minority of the Commission looked to the Guardians for a continuation of the excellent work they had done in the past. While the Commissioners recommended the creation of a central authority of a very wide and ample character, with many duties to perform, the proposal of the President of the Local Government Board was that there should be a Board simply for a few of the minor points recommended by the Commission as a whole. That proposal was of a so much reduced character that it could not be said to have been made in pursuance of the Report of the Commission at all. So far as he had heard the matter discussed, those who approved of the Report felt that the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman did not go far enough; on the other hand, those who opposed the Report felt that the proposal went a very great deal too far; and he had never come in contact with anyone who admired it as a safe middle line. He knew that those who would have to pay for it, the ratepayers, regarded the prospect with the very gravest misgiving. They saw that this proposal for taking care of the sick, feeble, and imbecile children would mean the creation of a new central Board, the building of new institutions, special hospitals, seaside convalescent homes, and the enlistment of an army of inspectors in addition to those which already existed, all of which must inevitably be costly; and when it was remembered how heavily burdened the ratepayers were at present, it was not to be wondered at that they should ask the House to ascertain unmistakably that this very expensive undertaking was necessary. This was a matter in which they should not be guided altogether by sympathy, although there was no case that appealed more strongly to that feeling. He should like to ask what were the recommendations of the particular proposals of the President of the Local Government Board? In the first place the right hon. Gentleman proposed to intrust the election of the Board not to the ratepayers, but, indirectly, to the Boards of Guardians, which he ventured to think an objectionable principle. In fact, the only argument which the supporters of the proposal advanced was that it created a central Board and effected that isolation of children suffering from contagious diseases, which was necessary, but which could be obtained just as well under existing circumstances by the Guardians. Those being the chief recommendations of the proposal, what were the objections to it? Everyone who had studied the subject of local government must acknowledge that one of the greatest evils of the past was the multiplication of authorities. There was already such an overlapping and an interlacing of authorities in London that the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman would make confusion worse confounded. Another objection to the proposal was that it embodied a thing alien to local self-government—a new central authority—not immediately responsible to the ratepayers. Again, there was no real need for this new authority. There were attached to each of the schools an infirmary which could be used for isolation without any increased expense. At Hanwell there was an ophthalmic hospital available for the children attending the schools. He should mention in this connection that the opinion of the Commission that ophthalmia was contagious was disputed by very high medical authorities, so that, in that respect, no need existed for carrying out the Report of the Commission. Then, in regard to feeble-minded patients he would point out that it was the opinion of some authorities this was a class which could not be benefited at all by isolation, that such children required the stimulus of companionship and that the worst thing for them would be the isolation that was suggested. On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that there were already organisations in existence, such as the Metropolitan Asylums Board, which rendered the creation of a new authority unnecessary. He agreed that something was to be said in favour of using such existing organisations; but he was bound to add that the experience of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, partly indirectly elected and partly nominated by the Local Government Board, was not universally in its favour, especially in regard to cost. In 1877 the cost of the Asylum Board was £8,845. In ten years it had increased to £15,438; and in 1896 it was no less than £32,009. In the Report of the Commission there was a condemnation of the Asylum Board as a proper organisation for dealing with this class of cases; and in the Minority Report the same condemnation was more emphatically expressed. These were reasons for hesitating before accepting the conclusions of the Commission, or even the more modified proposal of the President of the Local Government Board. Why should not the work go on as at present, supervised by the Local Government Board? If the staff of the Local Government

Board was overworked it could be easily increased. It seemed to him that that was the best way to deal with the question—on the old lines with the co-operation of the Guardians and under the supervision of the Local Government Board. As to the question of education, no one would object to the restoration of inspection by the Education Department itself, which was removed by Mr. Lowe in 1859. He quite admitted that in the past there had been evils, but they could be remedied by less expensive means than these proposals of the right hon. Gentleman. What was wanted was reform, not revolution. If the President of the Local Government Board would take that line, he would have the fullest sympathy and support of the Guardians concerned in the matter. In this work of securing more isolation, better education, and better provision for the in-and-out children of the workhouses, and in raising the prospects which they might have in the future, the right hon. Gentleman was engaged in a difficult, though a hopeful and a useful task, and he hoped that, instead of making proposals which were repugnant in the highest degree, the right hon. Gentleman would at least see whether there were not existing organisations capable of doing the work. He hoped that by some statement the right hon. Gentleman would reassure public opinion and relieve the minds of the ratepayers.

Mr. ERNEST FLOWER (Bradford, W.) called attention to the disputes which now arose between local authorities as to the settlement of paupers.

Mr. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) rose to order. He wished to know whether it was in order to run off the subject of the particular reduction which had been moved?

*The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS: Any subject which is germane to the Local Government Board can be raised on this Motion.

Mr. FLOWER said that he should afterwards pass to the subject of his hon. Friend's reduction. He had accounts of three or four recent cases of difference between local authorities as to which of them should bear the cost of paupers—cases which had been carried to the House of Lords and involved a great expense in litigation. He suggested that the Local Government Board should have power to appoint permanent officials to deal with these disputes, and that their decisions should be final. As to the question raised by his hon. Friend the Member for South Islington, he hoped that the President of the Local Government Board would modify considerably or entirely abandon the proposals contained in the draft order which had been issued with his authority. That order had been considered by various representative metropolitan bodies, and their reception of it had not been favourable. A conference of Guardians representing all London was held on the 26th February this year. The Camberwell Guardians thought the proposal undesirable, unless all classes of children were placed under such authority, and the members of the same popularly elected. St. George's, Hanover Square, thought the proposal undesirable; St. Giles's, Bloomsbury, and Paddington, suggested the Metropolitan Asylums Board and the School Board as the new authorities; Hackney suggested the Metropolitan Asylums Board; Holborn, Lambeth, and Shoreditch protested against the proposal; St. Saviour's suggested an inquiry; Islington viewed the proposal with alarm; and Wandsworth suggested a postponement. The matter had also been considered by the London County Council, who had unanimously passed a resolution stating that the establishment of a new and distinct metropolitan authority for a section of the poor-law children was undesirable, and calculated to lead to endless expense, and that the constitution of the authority suggested by the Local Government Board was opposed to the resolution of the Council of June 5, 1894. This objection to this draft scheme was that it complicated instead of simplifying the existing system. At present there were dealing with the 17,000 poor-law children in London four Government Departments, 32 directly elected bodies, 7 indirectly elected bodies, and 547 voluntary committees. The new Board proposed would only add further confusion to an already confused condition of things. Further, it would do nothing to carry out those reforms which were recognised as necessary by all the members of the late Departmental Committee. It would do nothing to prevent the aggregation of children which had been shown again and again to be attended with bad effects morally, mentally, and physically. This was recognised by the officials of the Local Government Board themselves. In the 19th Annual Report, Dr. Bridges, the Medical Inspector of the Local Government Board, drew a striking contrast between the appearance of the boys on the training-ship *Exmouth* and the inmates of the ordinary poor-law school, who were sluggish, dull, slouching, and disinclined to play. There were 1,600 of these children now suffering from ophthalmia, ringworm, and other skin diseases, and that in itself was a complete condemnation of the barrack system. The proposals of the President of the Local Government Board would not touch the root of the evil at all. Palliatives were of little use while the causes remained. The Board proposed was practically a useless body. His hon. Friend the Member for South Islington spoke slightingly of the efforts of the Departmental Committee to ascertain the actual state of affairs. But he would point out there was no other method of obtaining accurate information than the method adopted by the Departmental Committee, which spared neither time nor labour in mastering the details.

SIR ALBERT ROLLIT said that he fully acknowledged the services of the Committee, but he urged that no casual visit once or twice could give the knowledge and authority which was obtained by ten years' acquaintance with the schools.

MR. FLOWER accepted the correction. But he thought that even such a casual visit paid by experts must bring important facts to light. As to the slight conflict between the evidence and the Report, the Committee had a very difficult task in trying to extract information from officials who were, from their positions, more or less unwilling to impart it. With regard to buildings, the normal children did not need these institutions at all. The abnormal did need them, but the proposal of the President of the Local Government Board was to take the abnormal children, who did need them, and hand them over to a board which had not got the institutions, and leave the normal children, who did not need them in the hands of a body with the institutions. He agreed with the hon. Member for Islington that the scheme pleased nobody and disappointed many who had founded their hopes on the Report of the Committee. He earnestly appealed to the right hon. Gentleman to again consider whether it was not possible to carry out the great scheme of reform which was advocated by the Departmental Committee by arming himself with legislative powers to establish a central board for all the pauper children in London. What were the advantages which would accrue from such a proposal? In a sentence he would say that it simplified, and simplicity in Local Government meant economy. In the second place it would pool the children, pool the buildings, and pool the money. It would enable them to equalise the rates and bring about the sense of common interest and common union between the rich and poor unions of the Metropolis. And it would do one thing more, it would enable them to put an end to that system of working pauper children, regardless of their educational standard, of the half-timers. Their system of boarding-out had been tried with success in important provincial centres. Sheffield had led the way, and he was glad to think that in Bradford the system had worked most satisfactory results. If the right hon. Gentleman would carry out the recommendations of the Committee, he would do something to lessen the hardships of these little ones, who had inherited so much misery and trouble, and to secure for them a brighter prospect for the future.

SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derbyshire, Ilkeston) was not enamoured with the idea that in future the ordering of these children should devolve upon a separate body. He did not think that a body which was halfway between heaven and earth, with no direct responsibility to the ratepayers and only under the control of the Local Government Board in an imperfect manner, was an ideal body to have the care of these children. He would rather encourage the Guardians to go on improving as they had done of late years —["hear, hear!"]—and the way to encourage them was to press responsibility more closely home upon them. In order to do that, the Local Government Board ought itself to be re-organised, so that it could give more direct attention to these matters, and be in a position to exercise more authoritative control over Boards of

Guardians in doing their duty. If they had a sub-department of the Local Government Board, charged with the care of children, sick as well as healthy, they should do a great deal to improve, not only the education of such children, but to stamp out those diseases which had been a scandal to poor law administration. He rose more especially, however, to call attention to a matter which was of considerable consequence to the country generally, and that was the order which the Local Government Board had recently issued in connection with Parish Council Elections. Unfortunately the Local Government Act did not allow the same simplicity to be carried into Parish Council Elections which exists in Municipal Elections. The Act was so drawn that a parish meeting had to receive the nominations for parish councillors, and to take a vote on their nominations, and consequently they had been reduced to what was really a barbarous system—a show of hands at parish meetings on the nomination of candidates for parish councillors. This show of hands was a very unpopular method, for this reason, that at these meetings, composed as they were largely of two classes of people, one the employers and the other the employed, the latter were placed in a very invidious position if they voted against their employers or employers' nominees, and the consequence was that the show of hands had over and over again been completely reversed when they had the opportunity of taking the ballot. They had constantly cases of this kind, not only on the first occasion of parish elections but on the second occasion as well. The right which should be given to the citizens to obtain a ballot almost automatically on the demand of one of the voters ought not to be lightly thrown aside. Upon what grounds had this alteration been made? He assured the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board that it caused his predecessors some trouble to get rid of the system of a show of hands, and there was some difficulty in devising another system. Elections went on for a couple of years under the new system, and the right hon. Gentleman was asked questions in the House as to whether he could alter the system and give one elector the power to demand a poll. It was said that it was undesirable that one voter should have this right to put the parish to the expense of having a poll. It was also said that factious persons or cranks, or even a local poacher, might put the parish to this expense; but he did not see why even a poacher should not be able to do so as long as he retained the rights enjoyed by any other citizen. Nor did he see why this should always be supposed to be the action of a crank. These polls had not been demanded in a vast number of instances by factious persons or by other persons without a reason for uttering their demand. In these cases they ought not to deprive citizens of their rights on the ground that in some few instances the rights might be abused. There were 7,000 of these elections taking place every year, and they ought to be careful, therefore, in interfering with the rights of a vast majority of the citizens because a few persons might have put a parish to the unnecessary expense of a poll. Expense was not necessarily involved because a ballot was demanded. There was always a considerable interval between the demanding of the ballot, the nomination, and the last day of withdrawal. There was also time if the ballot was improperly demanded to influence candidates to withdraw and save expense to the parish. This point, therefore, ought not to loom too largely in the consideration of hon. Gentlemen who thought that one elector should not have the right to put a parish to the trouble of an election. When these rules were first issued he had many representations made to him that in many villages they could not find more than one man who would take up the unpopular position of demanding a poll. Personally he had known many villages of that kind; but now, by a stroke of the pen, the Local Government Board altered all this and required practically five electors, or the consent of the chairman and one elector, in order to obtain a poll. That was too clean a sweep to make. He had a bundle of letters in his possession from various parts of the country since these parish elections had come on under the new system complaining of the difficulty of obtaining a poll. The difficulty was expressed very forcibly in some of these letters. One writer said:—

"This rule would mean a most serious interference with the right and freedom of parishes in the elections."

Another pointed out that in a place under the control of a large colliery company it would be

> "a difficult matter to find five working men with courage enough to demand a poll at the parish meeting in the presence of the mine-owner and his agents."

Another wrote that "he regards it as a serious curtailment of their liberties;" and he found that, in various Parish Council meetings held, the same difficulty had arisen even during the recent elections. Stress was laid on the difficulty of finding five men, that the show of hand system was so unsatisfactory that they would rather submit to the ballot, and

> "the moment the master's hand goes up it was a signal for his servants and hangers-on to vote in the same direction."

Then it was said that "five men could not be found, for the simple reason that they were too afraid." If this feeling of fear existed, whether well or ill founded, the Committee ought to do its best to minimise and take it away. He thought, therefore, that the right hon. Gentleman might have waited a little longer before interfering with the rules established by his predecessor. No doubt the right hon. Gentleman would say that he had substantial reasons for making the change. Had the right hon. Gentleman obtained intimations in favour of the alteration from five per cent. of the Parish Councils, or even from two per cent. or three per cent. of the Parish Councils? He might have received representations from individuals who might be important and influential, but as to the Parish Councils themselves he did not think that the right hon. Gentleman had any large representations from the 7,000 Parish Councils that had to hold parish elections. He did not think, therefore, that a change of this kind which struck at the freedom of election ought to be undertaken by any Minister unless he was backed up by a strong amount of popular feeling. He ought to have direct evidence from the localities themselves that the people most affected were anxious for the change. It was too early to begin to meddle with an Act which had only been two years in force, and to meddle with rules which had not had time to be thoroughly tried and worked. As a matter of ordinary moral right there was power to demand a poll by a single elector in connection with many small subjects affecting the parish, but they were unimportant in comparison with the right affecting the governing body of the locality. That right had been taken away by this order of the Local Government Board before sufficient time had been afforded to test the working of the system. In the interests of local liberty in many rural parishes he protested against this order, and he asked the right hon. Gentleman to reconsider the matter during the next few months with a view to altering it when he issued the order for the next parish council elections.

*MR. ARTHUR JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke) pointed out that the appeals in connection with this subject had come from both sides of the House. When the subject was brought forward on a previous occasion there was really no Debate on the question, and apparently the House at that time was unanimous in saying that the rule ought to be altered. The mover of the Amendment had given a most extraordinary account of parish life. He was astonished anyone should say that there was any great feeling in a parish that one man should be able to demand a poll, and thereby put the whole parish to the trouble and expense of an election. In the county in which he lived, and where he had the honour of being the chairman of one Parish Council and chairman of a parish meeting in another parish, they were unanimous in resenting the order which Mr. Shaw-Lefevre and the hon. Gentleman opposite had made, and under which one man, who might not be a ratepayer in the parish, could demand a poll and put the whole parish to the trouble and expense of a poll because the men he wanted to have elected were not chosen by show of hands at the parish meeting. He would like to remind the House of what the Act itself said. By Section 48 it was provided that the election of the Councils established by the Act should be according to the rules laid down by the Local Government Board. Then in the First Schedule he found that Rule 7 said that a poll might be demanded by one elector in a number of instances which the hon. Gentleman opposite had mentioned, but that rule did not mention the election of Parish

Councillors as one of them. That was not mentioned in the schedule at all, and the only way that Mr. Shaw-Lefevre and the hon. Gentleman opposite could get in this order was under Sub-section K, which said "in other prescribed matters." Would it be believed that it was on account of this outlet which they got, that they made the order that any one man might claim a poll. That was not all, because at the end of this particular section of the schedule were these words:—

> "But, save as aforesaid, a poll shall not be taken unless either the chairman assents or the poll is demanded by the parochial electors, not being less than five in number."

He would like to remind the House of what took place during the passage of the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton—and they all recognised the fair and impartial manner in which he conducted the discussions on that Bill—said, when they were discussing whether there ought to be a ballot or not, that certainly he thought it ought not to be put in the hands of less than five people, because if five people did not, or would not, demand a poll in the parish it could not be worth having—the demand was not a real one. In the face of that, how could the hon. Gentleman opposite say it was intended by the Act that one man should be able to demand a poll? This order was almost outside the Act altogether, and yet it was contended that it was a very strong measure for his right hon. Friend suddenly to change that order. He was quite certain that his right hon. Friend was backed by the almost unanimous opinion of the country. He could not say absolutely unanimous, because the hon. Gentleman opposite had produced half-a-dozen letters against it.

Sir WALTER FOSTER: I could have produced hundreds.

*Mr. JEFFREYS said he dared say his right hon. Friend had also letters by hundreds. He was sure that Mr. Shaw-Lefevre had many appeals addressed to him on the subject, and from his own experience he could tell the Committee of certainly dozens of parishes who were unanimous in wishing the rule to be altered. He would be astonished if any Gentleman in that House, who was a Member of a Parish Council, would get up and deny that it was the general feeling of the Parish Councils throughout the land that that order was a bad one, and that they hailed with general approval and delight the order of his right hon. Friend giving the power of this demand for a poll to five instead of one. While the order of Mr. Shaw-Lefevre and the hon. Gentleman opposite was almost outside the letter of the Act, the order of his right hon. Friend left the Act as it was passed.

*Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) said he had no doubt that when they came to amend the Local Government Act there would be a great deal to be said in favour of a middle course on this question. The result of the power being in the hands of one man in many cases was to put the parish to great expense. On the other hand, he could assure the hon. Member who had just spoken that his hon. Friend who raised this question was perfectly right in saying that there were great numbers of small parishes in which a poll demanded by one man had produced a result wholly different from that shown in the parish meeting. The hon. Member for Islington, in a speech with a great deal of which he agreed, protested against the creation of a new metropolitan authority, and, at the same time indicated his wish that the Department of the Local Government Board dealing with this question should be strengthened as an alternative. He believed that when certain abuses had been discovered in any system, people were always apt to jump to remedies, which themselves would produce even greater abuses in the long run. That, he believed, would be the case in the creation of a central authority of this kind. All of them would desire that there should be an improvement in the treatment of these poor children, and many of them thought that if Boards of Guardians were more and more induced by the example and teaching of the Local Government Board, either to board out or emigrate children, and to adopt the cottage home system, coupled under the direction of the Board, with seaside homes for children suffering from certain diseases, without the revolutionary remedy of the creation of a new central authority, everything would be done that the House really wished to be done in connection with this subject. No doubt the Local Government Board was weak in its staff on certain sides, and no doubt it was overworked, in consequence of which a great deal of irritation and friction and bad administration in localities had been fostered by the slowness of communication between headquarters and the localities. This was a pressing matter at this moment, inasmuch as an inquiry was taking place into the staff of the Local Government Board. He was a little afraid that any such inquiry must assume the wisdom of all that was being done in the office, and that where they found a particular branch of the office overworked, it must necessarily lead to an increase of that particular branch. It was, therefore, well to point out that there were those who believed that a large amount of work was being done by the office at the present moment, which it had better not do at all. He was one of those who were opposed to centralisation in any form, but he admitted it was not the fault of the Local Government Board. Parliament had undoubtedly been careless in its legislation, and had constantly thrown on the Local Government Board an immense amount of work, much of which might have been avoided altogether. When the Local Government Bill was under discussion, there was great difficulty in giving the power of Parish Councils in many matters to other parties than the Parish Councils. The first part of the Bill was concerned with rural parishes—in the first line of the Bill the words "rural parish" occurred. All the powers relating to rural parishes had to be applied to other places that were not rural at all, and that could not be done by any ordinary Motion. The course which was adopted led to an enormous amount of work being thrown on the Local Government Board. For example, it was wished by many districts, districts really undistinguishable from rural parishes, to have the powers of the Parish Councils in the matter of charities, allotments, appointment of overseers and the like. The Local Government Board took the view, which he did not think Parliament meant them to take, but which they were justified in taking by the letter of the law, that they ought to correspond with the locality in every case. There was often a very long correspondence, and in the end an order was made or refused. Often a correspondence was held with the Charity Commissioners, entailing enormous work and delay. He had always thought that the Board made too many inquiries, but whether that was so or not, the correspondence with local authorities had been enormously increased by the Local Government Act, and he hoped that if the deliberations of Sir John Hibbert's Committee led to an increase of staff, as he believed they would, the increase would take place, for example, in the department which dealt with pauper children rather than in that which dealt with purely formal matters, which only caused friction between the Board and local authorities.

*The SECRETARY to the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. T. W. Russell, Tyrone, S) said that he rose at the request of his right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board, because they thought it would be well to clear away one or two questions which had arisen, in order that the Committee might get back to the main point at issue, that of the Poor Law schools. His hon. Friend the Member for West Bradford raised a question as to the law of settlement. The hon. Member admitted that the law raised difficult issues, not only between parts of England, but between England and Ireland, and between Ireland and Scotland, and the suggestion he made was that the Local Government Board should appoint some special inspectors to deal with questions of dispute arising between Boards of Guardians.

Mr. FLOWER said his suggestion was that the Local Government Board should take power to appoint an official who should act as referee.

*Mr. T. W. RUSSELL drew the attention of the hon. Member to 14 and 15 Vic., chap. 105, which expressly dealt with the point. If two Boards of Guardians were at issue in regard to settlement, and they chose to unite in stating a case for the Local Government Board, the Board was directed to inquire and its decision was final.

Mr. FLOWER said his desire was that the Board itself should have compulsory power.

*Mr. T. W. RUSSELL said that the point would be considered, but legislation would be required if it were to be dealt with. In regard to the point raised by his hon. Friend the Member for the Ilkeston Division, he thought he ought to make it clear, not only what had been done, but why the Local Government Board had declined to insert in the order issued this year power which undoubtedly was conceded in the order issued by Mr. Shaw Lefevre, and he believed in the first order issued by the present President of the Local Government Board. A single elector had not power to demand a poll under the Statute itself, and in order that he should have that power the Local Government Board had to intervene and confer the power upon him by regulation and order. When the attention of his right hon. Friend was first drawn to the matter he stated in the House that he would be quite willing to receive information from all parts of the House in regard to the opinion entertained by hon. Members on the point. The opinions of hon. Members were freely given, and they were all in one direction. Upon the Estimates a discussion was raised, and he said that in consequence of the information that had reached his right hon. Friend it was not intended to insert the provision in question in the next order. Not a word of protest was raised. The Local Government Board had received a great many communications—[Sir WALTER FOSTER: "From whom?"] They had had only six communications against the order of this year—four from Parish Councils, and two from Liberal Associations. That was the entire body of evidence against the present form of order.

SIR WALTER FOSTER asked whether the hon. Gentleman would say whether the Board had received information showing that even 1 per cent. of the Parish Councils were in favour of the order?

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said that information had been received from four Parish Councils only, and they were against the order. The great body of Parish Councils had raised no protest whatever.

SIR WALTER FOSTER: Do they ask for the change?

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said that his right hon. Friend left the matter to the opinion of the House, and that opinion had been conveyed in the clearest terms. They had had 77 applications from different parts of the country to change the order to its present form, and they had had only four objections to it. So far as he was aware the great bulk of the Members of the House were in favour of the alteration being made. As to the question of the reorganisation of the Local Government Board, the Committee were aware that a Departmental Committee was now sitting. They had almost brought their labours to a close, and he was certain that valuable results would follow the Report of that Committee. The Local Government Board had been blamed continuously for the delay in doing its work, but he said that Parliament, and not the Board, was to blame for that. There was scarcely a thing that, instead of being done by Parliament, was not left to be done by rule and regulation. Session after Session this work had been heaped upon the Local Government Board, and Parliament had not seen that the Board was properly manned. The work had got seriously into arrear, and no one knew it better than the Board itself. In the House Members complained of the delay that took place in the carrying out of inquiries and in issuing orders, but he hoped that as a result of the Departmental Committee much of this would be cured. He did not know how far the principle of devolution would be carried, but that point had been committed to the Committee and it had been carefully considered. He would not advise any one to build too much on that —[*ironical cheers*]—and for this reason, not because the Local Government Board objected to it, but because of the difficulties that were in the way. Under the Act of 1888 Parliament contemplated that some of the work should be done by the local authorities, the County Councils, but not one year was allowed to pass before objections were raised against the section of the Act being put into operation. These difficulties did not arise with the Local Government Board or, as far as he knew, with any other Department. They were purely local, as between the non-county boroughs and the County Councils. Therefore he hoped that a good deal of the odium that had fallen on the Local Government Board because of these delays would be removed by the labours of the Committee.

*SIR HENRY FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) said he was very sensible of his relations to the House in respect to the Measure which he had carried through

Parliament. The House had treated him with such generous confidence that he should deeply regret that there should arise any misconception as to the view he took, or that he had in any degree departed from any undertaking which he had given. He had endeavoured to fulfil every promise that he then made. Members would recollect that there was a question as to the additional expense in connection with parish meetings. Questions arose as to the taking of polls and the cost. There was a strong feeling on both sides of the House against allowing one person to put the parish to the expense of a poll on the occasion of the election of parish councillors, and it was eventually agreed that two persons, in addition to the candidate and his mover and seconder, making five in all, should be necessary to obtain a poll. It was also agreed that the resolution on which one voter could demand a poll should be specified in a schedule to the Act. Some general words were added giving power to the Local Government Board to prescribe any other matter on which one voter could demand a poll. The right hon. Gentleman then explained the circumstances which led up to this decision, and, proceeding, said he had regretted that he had not had, like other parents, the education of his own children. [*Laughter.*] He should have liked to have had the superintending of his own Act. He should like to refer to a matter touched upon by the right hon. Baronet (Sir C. Dilke), and he felt bound to say that the administration of the Local Government Board was in direct antagonism to what the Government and the House understood when they assented to Clause 33. It was held that unless the Board saw some good reason to the contrary, it ought automatically to transfer the powers possessed by Parish Councils to District Councils. He did not think that there was great waste of public time and a great deal of irritation caused to the local authorities by the interposing of difficulties as to this transfer. He attached no blame to the right hon. Gentleman, for he may have construed the clause differently from the construction which he and those who took an active part in carrying the Act put upon it.

Sir WALTER FOSTER: In personal explanation, I should like to say, after the speech of my right hon. Friend, that Mr. Shaw Lefevre and myself were quite ignorant of the circumstances mentioned by my right hon. Friend when the Order was under consideration. It was issued in perfect *bonâ fides*—["hear, hear!"]—in the interests, as we believed, of the rights of the parish electors. ["Hear, hear!"]

*Mr. GEOFFREY DRAGE (Derby) referring to the criticisms which had been passed on the Government respecting the delay which had taken place in giving effect to the Report of the Departmental Committee published last year, said, that those who indulged in those criticisms failed to remember the difficulties under which the President of the Local Government Board and the Department had laboured last year. Further, the evils complained of had long been known to the Department. The Report of Mr. Doyle in 1878, and that of the House of Lords Committee in 1888, showed that the present abuses were nothing new, and the fact that such able administrators as the Member for the Forest of Dean, the Member for Wolverhampton, the present President of the Board of Trade, and the First Lord of the Treasury, had not been able to devise any reform, proved that the difficulty was no light one, and that neither party at the present time had any capital to make out of the state of the Poor Law schools. ["Hear, hear!"] It was, however, high time that some steps were taken, and the question before the Committee was, what was the policy of the Government, and what was the policy proposed by their critics? On February 1st the President of the Local Government Board had announced his policy. It was that a new authority should be constituted in the metropolis to take charge of the Poor Law children suffering from ophthalmia and skin disease, the children of defective intellect, and those remanded to workhouses, as well as the children now living in workhouses. Further, he intended to discourage the formation of new barrack schools and to get rid of the old barrack school. To this policy there were two obvious criticisms: In the first place, why should a new authority be created when the Metropolitan Asylums Board already managed, not only children's hospitals, but an asylum for imbecile children at Darenth. Further, the Board had been most successful in the management of the *Exmouth* training ship, and was able as well as willing to undertake the task. In the second place it might be urged that the extra cubic space the President hoped to gain by the arrangement, would be more than filled by the children now in the workhouse which he proposed to bring in; in other words, the evils inherent in barrack schools would continue and even be intensified in the metropolis, and he desired to remind the Committee that there were provincial schools in which these evils exist at the present day. He need not add what those evils were, the great cost (double that of the boarding-out system), the deficient education, the inadequate industrial training, the disease and consequent deterioration of character. ["Hear, hear!"] But the evils inherent in the barrack schools were not the only difficulties which the Local Government Board would in future have to combat. There was the case of the so-called "in-and outs." No power was to be given to any authority to prevent parents dragging their children in and out of the schools as often as they liked, bringing disease and demoralisation with them, and no provision was apparently to be made for new receiving homes like that at Hammersmith. ["Hear, hear!"] Reference had been made to the increase of staff at the Local Government Board. He hoped that the question of the inspection of the 1,700 boarded-out children by an inspector who had clerical work as well, would not be forgotten. Further assistance was wanted, and further powers for the after care and control of Poor Law children, as well as better provision for the enforcement of the law with regard to half-timers—["hear, hear!"]—at present so generally broken according to the Report. The abolition of barrack schools would be necessarily gradual, but it was at last to be definitely undertaken. The policy of the President of the Local Government Board included, he was glad to see, the inspection of Poor Law children in the colonies. He hoped it would also include the provision of training ships, by which, as in the case of the *Exmouth*, the ranks of our merchant navy might receive a supply of excellent recruits. But he need not remind the Committee that all the laws that could be enacted and administered by the Local Government Board would be of no avail unless there was cordial co-operation on the part of the guardians, and local charity and self-help. ["Hear, hear!"] He deplored the reflections contained in the Report of the Departmental Committee on the work of Boards of Guardians as a whole, and on the work of men and women who had given their lives without stint to carrying out the most necessary but thankless work in the interests of the country. ["Hear, hear!"] Valuable as the Report was, as the work of eminent experts who had heard the evidence and seen the schools, he could not help regretting the bias in favour of one system (when many systems had done good work) as well as the inaccuracies which had crept into the Report. It would be necessary to obtain the co-operation of the local authorities as well as of local and central charitable authorities if any permanent good work was to be done. In conclusion, he appealed to the House of Commons not only to insist on the necessary laws being passed, and the necessary administrative measures being undertaken, but he asked hon. Members whether they could not, each in their own district, do something to inculcate and practise sympathy and charity to these poor children, so as to give them the opportunity of climbing from the lowest to the highest position in the State. ["Hear, hear!"]

*MR. SAMUEL SMITH (Flintshire) said he had no wish to blame the Local Government Board for their tardiness, because he knew they had been very much overburdened with work; but the draft Order issued seemed to him very inadequate. He did not think the Report of the Commission had received proper attention from the House. It was a Commission of experts of the very first order, and he did not think seven men and one lady could have been found who more thoroughly understood the question with which they had to deal. He could assure the President of the Local Government Board that the state of things disclosed by their Report had sunk deep into the philanthropic mind of the country. ["Hear, hear!"] The state of affairs in Poor Law schools was made known over 20 years ago by Mrs. Nassau Senior. She was a Poor Law Guardian, and her report was that 50 per cent. of the girls trained in Poor Law schools turned out badly, and that only a small proportion could be said to turn out thoroughly well. Since those days some improvement had, no doubt, taken place, owing to the exertions of the Association for Befriending Young Servants. Nevertheless, the opinion of the ladies belonging to that association was that barrack schools were a great mistake; in those schools there was no development of individuality; the children were brought up like sheep, and treated like automatons. The child was described as "No. so-and-so." They were in some cases not even given names; there were too many of them for that! The result of the system was, that the affections of the children were starved, and everyone who had studied this question knew that to bring up together a vast number of girls in this artificial way meant to many of them moral ruin. Here was the testimony of a lady who had worked for 12 years among workhouse girls:—

> "In district school girls I have found very strongly marked what I think is a great characteristic of the girls brought up in such large schools—intense obstinacy and sullenness. . . . I do feel most strongly that family life, even among the very poor, has an entirely different effect on the character of a child from life in a large school."

There was no doubt that barrack school life ruined the tempers of the children, and in some cases it ruined their morals. Dr. Barnardo, through whose hands some 30,000 children had passed with great success, said, in his evidence, that he had been compelled to give up taking girls coming from Poor Law schools on account of their vicious tendencies. Very little had been said in that discussion about the enormous spread of ophthalmia in these schools. In some of the large schools as many as 30 or 40 per cent. of the children were affected, and they entered the world handicapped by weak and defective vision. Why should the children be exposed unnecessarily to this terrible complaint, which was the result of their being herded together in these huge barrack schools? The complaint was not known among the children who were boarded out. The proposal of the Local Government Board was simply to remove the children who suffered from the complaint; the breeding grounds, the schools that produced the ophthalmia, were to be left untouched. No attempt was made to deal with the causes of the complaint. Then the education supplied in Poor Law schools was very defective, the standard being far short of the standard in elementary schools. He strongly supported the recommendation that the children should be mixed up with other children in elementary schools. They ought to be allowed to attend such schools in ordinary dress, so that they should not suffer under the pauper taint. Perhaps the most difficult problem of all was how to deal with the "ins-and-outs." He had talked over this subject with some of the principal philanthropists of America. In that country the custom was to put the class of children whom we called "ins-and-outs" under the care and control of State Boards, until they arrived at the age of 21. Parents in America were not allowed to do what they liked with their children as they do here. They were not allowed to take them on the tramp, and to send them into workhouse schools in the intervals of a wandering life. It was impossible to impart a high moral tone to children who came out of the lowest lodging houses, or to make them amenable to discipline. He suggested that they ought to proceed on the lines adopted in America, and strengthen the control of the guardians over these children. We were too respectful in this country to what were called parental rights. Parents who were tramps and living bad lives had no right to ruin their children. The positive recommendations which had been made were most important. There was, in the first place, the recommendation regarding boarding out. In Scotland for many years, practically all the pauper children had been boarded out. There were no pauper schools there, and hereditary pauperism had been nearly eradicated from the country. The children were boarded out with respectable people; they attended the ordinary schools, were treated with affection, and were clothed as respectably as the children of honest working men. But in this country there were only some 1,800 children boarded out. Why was that? Was it because boarding out a child cost only 4s. a week, while a child cost 11s. in a pauper school? That was a strange reason; yet it was a fact that guardians preferred to pay 11s. a week per child to keep the children in pauper schools, than to pay 4s. a week to board them out in cottage homes. He knew there were difficulties in the way of the system of boarding out, but they could be surmounted, and with a sufficiently large staff and a sufficient number of female inspectors to follow the children, it would be possible to have 18,000 children boarded out instead of only 1,800. Miss Brodie Hall said in her evidence:—

> "Home training involves a great many things which perhaps men know less of than women; it is the small details of everyday home life that bring out the character of a child, and that, as it grows up, enable it to develop, though unconsciously, self-dependence, resourcefulness, thriftiness; it learns by the example of its elders. . . . Then there is another thing: home life draws out the personal affections, and I think it is one of the most terrible things in workhouses or in very large schools that a child who can elsewhere be trained, up to a certain age, through its affections, has that particular item in its human character perfectly undeveloped, and I believe that is the reason that so many of them in after life fail."

Miss Hall also pointed out that boys and girls when boarded out lived together, whereas they were kept apart in pauper schools, with the result that they had no notion of how to behave towards one another. All sorts of evils arose in after life from the unnatural way in which boys and girls were prevented from meeting as children. In Scotland, where the boarding-out system prevailed, the vitality of the children was far higher, and their general health far better. But, in his opinion, incomparably the best method of dealing with poor children was emigration. He possessed 20 years' experience of this method, and between 3,000 and 4,000 emigrated children must have passed under his review. During a recent visit to Canada he found that the condition of the children sent to Canadian homes was all that anyone could desire. They were happy, well fed, well clothed, and lived the same life as the farmers' families did. He did not meet with a single complaint in any house that he visited, either from the farmer or from the children. There was no difficulty in placing as many children as the society with which he was connected could send out, and the society paid nothing for their maintenance. He was aware that there were difficulties in the way of what he advocated. The Canadians objected to pauper children because they knew how badly they turned out. They did not object to children who had been trained in a home. He proposed that destitute children should not go into pauper schools at all, but should go into one of the many excellent homes intended for them, certified, if necessary, by the Local Government Board, and should only after spending one or two years in these be emigrated. They would then have a happy and prosperous future. He wished to see pauper schools abolished. Their expense was enormous. One had cost £177,000. It was a shame and a scandal that such a place should ever have been built. The children should be restored to a healthy natural life in respectable homes. Institutions which entailed the maximum of cost often did a minimum of good. As far as he knew, most lady guardians were opposed to pauper schools and were in favour of restoring children to a wholesome family life. He trusted the Local Government Board would work in that direction, and this expression of opinion among those conversant with the subject would strengthen their hands.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. HENRY CHAPLIN, Lincolnshire, Sleaford) said that nothing had been more striking in the course of the Debate than the wide diversity of opinion which appeared to prevail, not only on both sides of the House, but as shown in the speeches of the Mover and Seconder of the Amendment. The Local Government Board was condemned because it went too far, and, on the other hand, because it did not appear to go half far enough. The Board, therefore, might hope that in the middle course it had taken it had acted wisely. He would deal with two or three points raised by the Mover of the Amendment, and then with the general question. The hon. Member spoke of the failures of the Local Government Board. It was true that the Board for a long time past had been undermanned and greatly overworked. That might account for some of the failures people were justly inclined to condemn. A Committee of Inquiry into the organisation and work of the Department was sitting, and had for some time sat; and when its labours were completed, he had every hope and confidence that the Board, as regarded its work and arrears, would be able to show a very different record in the future. The hon. Member spoke of the great contrast between the evidence given before the Committee on Poor Law Schools and their Report to the public. There was reason for that criticism. It had frequently been proposed from both sides of the House that inspection, as far as the education of Poor Law children was concerned, should be undertaken by the Education Department rather than by the Local Government Board. The latter would always be willing to agree to it, and, if practicable, to have it carried out, though there were difficulties in the way. It might clear the ground and tend to the convenience of the Committee if he stated, as briefly as he could, the circumstances under which the Order of the Local Government Board under discussion came to be issued. It was true that the Report of the Poor Law Schools Committee was published last year. At the close of last Session it was impossible for him to put before the House any definite policy on behalf of the Local Government Board; but he came to the conclusion, which must be shared by the majority of the members of the Committee, that the Report having been published, the question must be dealt with. He did not agree with speakers in the Debate, who seemed to think the Report might have been ignored altogether; and, if dealt with, the choice of methods lay between the acceptance of the recommendations of the Committee on the one hand, and on the other some such proposals as those which had been issued under the Order of the Board. He elected to proceed by Order instead of by legislation, for the reason that he was afraid that, in the present condition of public business in the House of Commons, if he relied upon legislation, in all probability he would never have an opportunity this Session of dealing effectively with the question at all. He admitted that this method of procedure had its disadvantages. ["Hear, hear!"] In the absence of opportunities to receive Parliamentary criticism, he thought it right to issue this Order in a tentative form, and send it to all the boards of guardians and managers of districts chiefly concerned, to give them an opportunity of making any criticisms they pleased. That had been done with good results. The Order had been carefully considered by the local authorities at a conference attended by delegates from every board of guardians concerned, and he had received more than one deputation on the subject. He had now little doubt that, in the final form in which he proposed that the Order should be issued, it would command the support of the large majority of the local authorities concerned. The hon. Member who seconded the Motion before the House only told them of those who were opposed to the Order. But if the views of those who were in its favour were considered, it might be seen that the conclusion which might otherwise be drawn would be altogether erroneous. He would point out that the great distinction between the recommendations of the Report of the Committee and the order of the Local Government Board consisted in this, that the Committee recommended that a central body should be appointed to take over the charge and control of all the Poor Law children in all the Poor Law institutions in the metropolis, while the order contemplated the appointment of a central authority which was to take over the control of certain classes only of these children. The classes which they proposed should be handed over to the new authority were children suffering from ophthalmia and diseases of the eyes, from skin and scalp diseases, or from mental or physical infirmity, and children requiring the benefits of sea air, and in homes for convalescents. With regard to the recommendations of the Committee, it seemed to him to be a very serious proposal to take away from the guardians the entire control of all the children at present in their institutions, and to hand them over to some other body. ["Hear, hear!"] In spite of this Report, he was aware of no circumstances whatever which, in his opinion, justified him in transferring the children *en bloc* from the guardians to some new authority. ["Hear, hear!"] He agreed with what had been said with regard to the evils which arose from the aggregation of vast masses of children in what were called these barrack schools which, undoubtedly, were a great blot upon the present system. But this was a matter with which it was impossible for anybody to deal by a stroke of the pen. ["Hear, hear!"] The Local Government Board had always been ready to consider any suggestions that could be made in regard to this matter, but he owned that he failed altogether to see how great improvements were to be effected in this respect more readily by any new authority they could make than by the authorities which existed at present. It must also be remembered, in justice to the existing authorities, that whatever objections these barrack schools were open to, and he admitted they were open to very grave objections, when created, at a period long antecedent to the present, they were at that time an enormous improvement on anything that had gone before. ["Hear, hear!"] That, he acknowledged, was no reason for retaining them any longer than could possibly be helped. His sympathies were entirely with those who disliked them, and the policy of the Local Government Board had been for a long time to reduce them wherever possible. The transfer under the order of the classes of children he had named to the new authority was the first step towards facilitating changes in the size, and to some extent the very construction, of these great schools to which so much objection was taken. Very shortly after this Report was published the Local Government Board instituted an inquiry by a very able expert, Professor Shaw, into the cubic space and ventilation in these barrack schools. He understood that this gentleman's investigations had been most careful and elaborate, and if the report which he was preparing was to the effect that the cubic space and the ventilation were inadequate that would at once necessitate the reduction, and probably the very large reduction, of the number of inmates of these schools, and this would afford opportunities for possible alterations in their construction. The hon. Member for Flintshire had said that these poor, unhappy children brought up under the Poor Law never knew what home life was like. He was afraid that statement was not altogether accurate; the hon. Member must remember that there were other and very different institutions than barrack schools which were now established. There were the cottage homes, and such institutions as the girls' school at Sutton, and there were other schemes in contemplation. In all such cases, as far as he was aware, the work done by the guardians at present was the very reverse of unsatisfactory. The hon. Member's statement was absolutely contrary to his own experience. He had visited a great number of these schools, and, undoubtedly, in the cottage home system everything was done that could be done in this respect.

*Mr. SAMUEL SMITH said he had criticised only the children in the barrack schools, and had not, of course, criticised those in the few cottage homes.

Mr. MUNDELLA pointed out that cottage homes were not barrack schools.

Mr. CHAPLIN said he was very much obliged to the right hon. Gentleman for his information, but that was exactly what he had himself been pointing out to the Committee. ["Hear, hear!" *and laughter.*] It was quite a mistake to say that all the children in the metropolis brought up under the Poor Law never knew how home work was done. He was quite sure that if any Member of that House would take the trouble to visit the cottage homes, or the girls' school at Sutton, he would agree that a great deal of most admirable work was being done at this moment. The hon. Member for Flintshire had also said that no one would take these children into service. But in the course of his own investigations he had been most struck with the immense demand which existed for their services. He was informed that last year the girls' school at Sutton received more than a thousand applications from those who wished to take girls into service in the country. That was the very last thing which anybody could infer from reading this report. While he thought that under the more modern methods a great deal of admirable work had been done, he held the decided opinion that, with regard to certain classes of these children, better arrangements could be made, and arrangements much more economical and effective, by some central authority than by a great number of different bodies. Take the case of the ophthalmic children. Their proper treatment involved separation and exceptional treatment. Under the system he proposed, if they were separated and given this exceptional treatment, their education could go on the whole time without being interrupted, and that was a matter of very great importance. It used to be alleged that ophthalmia was the creation of those schools and inseparable from them. But shortly after the issue of this Report the Local Government Board appointed Dr. Stevenson to examine the children attending the Poor Law schools and to make a Report in regard to them. Dr. Stevenson examined 17,000 of those children, and found that there was in the Poor Law schools of the Metropolis only one case of the severe type of ophthalmia, which was, therefore, practically extinct, while cases of a milder type had been reduced from 42 per cent. in 1874 to less than 5 per cent. in 1897. ["Hear, hear!"] There was one barrack school with 750 children in which there was not a single case of ophthalmia, and another barrack school where the cases of that disease were only four. ["Hear, hear!"] He thought all this showed that there were some advantages in the proposals he had made for separating the different classes of children. But the question what was the authority to be, remained. He had been blamed in the course of the Debate because his proposals were opposed to the recommendations of the Departmental Committee. But he could not find in the Report of the Committee the slightest guidance as to what form the authority was to take, and he was therefore thrown entirely upon his own resources in devising the authority. However, in deference to the views of the Committee, he had thought it right in the first instance to propose an entirely new authority instead of the present body, and so he issued an Order in that form; but it was evident, from the great number of objections the Order evoked, that there was a large preponderance of opinion in favour of the Metropolitan Asylums Board being made the authority, as against the creation of a new authority. ["Hear, hear!"] He therefore willingly reconsidered the position. He thought the suggestion that the Metropolitan Asylums Board should be the authority was the best—first, because it avoided the difficulties and expense of creating a new authority, and, secondly, because the Metropolitan Asylums Board afforded in the *Exmouth* training ship, which was under its charge, the one conspicuous instance of success in the management of Poor Law children. ["Hear, hear!"] That ship was originally provided by the Forest Gate school district—it being used also by children from other places—and finally it was transferred to the charge of the Metropolitan Asylums Board. In fact the *Exmouth* training ship was practically the first step in the policy which he was now proposing, and it had met, as all the Reports showed, with the most complete success. ["Hear, hear!"] He owned that at first he had some doubts as to whether the Metropolitan Asylums Board, with its numerous duties, would be able to undertake additional responsibilities; but after a series of communications with that body and interviews with its chairman, it appeared to him that with some addition to its members it would be perfectly within its scope and capacity to undertake these new duties—["hear, hear!"]—and if it appeared to him that it was desired that that should be the final form the Order should take, he would not hesitate to adopt a recommendation which had been made to him from many quarters. ["Hear, hear!"] He could assure the Committee that this was a subject in which he took the deepest interest. ["Hear, hear!"] Everything that touched the welfare and the happiness of children appealed very strongly to him, as he was sure it did to all Members of the House. ["Hear, hear!"] He had done his best, sparing neither time nor trouble, to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the subject. The problem was one that was not easily solved—["hear, hear!"]—and the wisest course for the Government and the wisest course for Parliament was to proceed in the matter with caution. ["Hear, hear!"] While he was ready to carefully consider all the various representations which had been made to him in the course of the Debate, the policy of the Local Government Board in the matter—subject to the reservation he had made in regard to the authority—must be upon the general lines which he had indicated; and he was quite confident that the experiment they were making was more likely to command success than any other with which he was acquainted. ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. A. J. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside) said that he was glad the right hon. Gentleman had retraced his steps in regard to the Order he had issued. ["Hear, hear!"] To call into existence a new central authority to deal with something like a thousand children suffering from various diseases would be a most unreasonable and extravagant action. [" Hear, hear!"] No one desired that such a step should be taken. It was altogether outside the recommendations of the Departmental Committee that such a body should be called into existence for such a purpose. The right hon. Gentleman was therefore to be congratulated on his second thoughts, and on having assigned those children to the Metropolitan Asylums Board. But the right hon. Gentleman had not done what was recommended by the Departmental Committee, and had in fact thrown that body over altogether. The Members composing the Departmental Committee—putting himself out of the question—were eminently qualified to deal with the matter for the consideration of which they had been appointed, and they had most valuable expert evidence before them. What did Dr Stevenson say on the subject of ophthalmia. He told the Committee that

> "long ago the majority of young adults coming under treatment for ophthalmia at the London hospitals had formerly been inmates of metropolitan pauper schools."

From his own experience he was in a position to justify the accuracy of that statement, and he possessed returns from a number of ophthalmic surgeons which showed that a large proportion of such cases had come from the schools in question. The hon. Member for Islington had stated that the Committee were not altogether agreed upon their Report. He desired to deal at once with that statement. The Committee were perfectly agreed upon all points of their Report except the one departure which the Vice President and Mrs. Barnett favoured—that, instead of being transferred to a central body, the children should be transferred to the Education Department. With that suggestion he did not agree then, nor did he now. He believed the children ought to be dealt with by one central authority; and, so far from saying there should be no guardians upon that central authority, six out of eight Members of the Committee were agreed that guardians should form part of the body. [" Hear, hear!"] Unless they had a central authority they could not deal with the metropolis as a whole, but with such an authority set up they could adopt the principle of gradual depletion with regard to the barrack schools, and ultimately get rid of the barrack school system altogether. [" Hear, hear!"] The right hon. Gentleman had said the matter could not be dealt with by a stroke of the pen. He agreed; the Report of the Committee admitted so much, and gave time for dealing with it. They could not possibly get rid of the question by simply dealing with these few diseased children, and the whole subject would have to be faced. He felt the inconvenience of dealing with a matter of this importance on an occasion like that, and on a Vote on account. This Report deserved some rather better treatment than such a casual and incidental discussion. [" Hear!"] What he wished to say was that they were at present dealing with these children in London in a manner that was most inimical to both their present and future lives. The children knew nothing, for instance, under the present system of natural life. [" Hear, hear!"] The right hon. Gentleman must know that the existing state of things was such that if it was continued they would have to enlarge their schools, as the number of children increased, and spend more money. Not only was the barrack school a vicious, but it was a most wasteful, system. In some of the schools the cost was £29 per head. Thus a widow who had her five or six children in one of these institutions would cost it for their maintenance £140 or £150 a year, whereas they could be boarded out for less than half that sum. If the boarding-out system were adopted, then in many cases the children could be boarded, as in Scotland, with the mothers or other relatives, and thus derive the advantages of home life. [" Hear, hear!"] If it were possible for them, by a stroke of the pen, to sweep away the barrack schools to-morrow, they would render invaluable service to the Poor Law children of the metropolis. [" Hear, hear!"] A central authority in which the barrack schools were vested should be created; it should have power to deal with such schools as opportunity served, and thus, by a course of gradual depletion, they would be able to get them off their hands. At present there was no means of getting rid of them, and they were an enormous burden to the various districts. He believed the cost to Paddington was £80 per child, and yet, though they were anxious to be freed from such a costly system, they were unable to effect this object. He thought it was high time that something was done to meet the undoubted mischiefs which arose from these buildings. He was sorry to say that the Local Government Board were not very receptive of improvements. They did not encourage them. He hoped some hon. Members interested in the question would bring it before the House when it could be properly thrashed out. Meanwhile, he could assure the President of the Local Government Board that he would be held responsible for not carrying out this Report. It was important to the children of the whole country that the boarding-out system should be adopted, and it would reduce the pauperism of the country and the expenditure as well. He hoped that when next the question was discussed, the right hon. Gentleman would make another step in advance.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said that the right hon. Gentleman had referred to these schools as though they were all barrack schools.

MR. MUNDELLA: All the children, except 1,100, are in barrack schools.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said that there were five district schools with 6,300 children which might be called barrack schools. There were 10 other schools with 4,600 children. [Mr. MUNDELLA: "Those are barrack schools."] He would not contest that for the moment. Then there were 15 Roman Catholic schools with 2,400 children. It was impossible to call those barrack schools, for the largest had only about 300 children. As to other schools, there was one with 209 children. Was that a barrack school? [Mr. MUNDELLA: "Yes."] Another with 148 children, a third with 112 children; one at Broadstairs with 25, one at St. George's-in-the-East with 235; another with 158, and the Marylebone school with 306. Those were not barrack schools in the sense represented by the right hon. Gentleman. As to the Report of Dr. Stevenson, in which he stated that he had frequently found cases of ophthalmia in the hospitals which had been brought from these schools, he thought that very likely, considering the prevalence of the disease in the schools. But Dr. Stevenson's Report had this remarkable statement:—

> "Apart from internal conditions, however, there can be no doubt that one great cause of the prevalence of ophthalmia in Poor Law schools comes from outside. The disease creeps into these institutions from the slums and courts of London, carried thither by the children who claim admission."

MR. MUNDELLA said that the quotation was not complete.

> "It was pointed out long ago by Mr. Nettleship that the majority of the young adults coming under treatment for ophthalmia at the London hospitals had been formerly inmates of the Poor Law schools. From my own experience, I can testify to the accuracy of that statement."

MR. T. W. RUSSELL pointed out in conclusion that the three cottage homes included 1,600 and not 1,100 children.

*MR. B. L. COHEN (Islington, E.) said that the statement of the President of the Local Government Board would be received with unqualified satisfaction by all the local governing bodies in London. They were glad to be rid of the new central authority; and he was glad to know that the children would be confided to a body which had the confidence of the public, and which had the organisation more or less at hand, and requiring only to be expanded. His only criticism of the right hon. Gentleman's statement was in regard to the proposal that all the children ordered by the magistrates to be taken to the workhouses or asylums should be confided to the Metropolitan Asylums Board. That body properly enjoyed the confidence of the inhabitants, but their experience was mostly with the diseased; and it was neither wise nor necessary to send to them children who were *ex hypothesi* healthy. He never wished to add to the duties of the London County Council; but by law the Council had charge of the industrial schools in the County of London, and to the Council might with advantage be confided these healthy children. There was, moreover, a great difference in the children suffering from defective intellect. Some were incurably affected, and some were only a little dull, and the latter would be better associated with healthy children, instead of being permanently banished to society which was more likely to aggravate than to cure their defect in mind. He was glad that the right hon. Gentleman was going to consult the Guardians of London.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.) said that he took a great interest in this question. He had listened with a feeling of absolute disappointment to the speeches of the President of the Local Government Board and his colleague. It was certainly a matter of grave concern that there were at present no less than nine educational authorities dealing with the education of children in London. Partly departmental, partly elective, partly co-optative, these authorities overlapped each other, and very often ran counter, not only to the interests of the children, but to the good performance of the duties carried out among them. There were 17,000 pauper children in London, and these were under the almost absolute control of the Local Government Board. The rest of the children of London were under the control of the Education Department and the School Board. What he ventured to urge on the right hon. Gentleman was, that he should not deal with the question in the optimist spirit he had displayed in his speech, but should endeavour to find a solution by transferring the control of the education of these pauper children from the demoralising influences of the pauper training they received, to the hands of the Education Department. He believed there was no other solution of the question except under the supervision of the Education authorities as the body responsible for the education of these children. Without meaning any offence, he could not but say that the speech of the right hon. Gentleman would be a source of great dissatisfaction to those interested in the education of these poor children. The right hon. Gentleman had expressed the optimist view that all things were being managed in the best possible manner, and any step must be in the direction of gradual evolution. The right hon. Gentleman agreed that the barrack school system was bad, and that he would be glad to see an alteration in that system; but he had indicated no solitary instance of the direction in which he was prepared to make a change. The right hon. Gentleman had told the Committee, and he ventured, with all respect, to doubt the accuracy of the statement, that some of the evils associated with pauper schools were diminishing, but he gave no figures, no statistics on the point. The only available material open for the Committee was that afforded by the Report of the Committee appointed *ad hoc*. He would take the condition of these children under three heads, and first educationally. Pauper children stood at a lower standard than the children under any other educational system. In the Report of that Committee it was shown that the education in Poor Law schools was infinitely inferior to that which obtained in ordinary elementary schools. There was no system of inspection for educational purposes in these schools by an educational authority; the inspection of the schools was an inspection by the Poor Law bodies alone, that is to say, the Local Government Board. The qualifications of the teachers were much below those of teachers in elementary schools; many of the head teachers were not certificated, and hardly any of the assistant teachers held a certificate or any proper diploma entitling them to teach in elementary schools. It had been asserted, though not a word was said about it by the right hon. Gentleman, that certain boards of guardians let their children go out to work as half-timers before they reached the necessary educational standard fixed for the purpose. Next, he took the question of health. The right hon. Gentleman said that Dr. Stevenson said that ophthalmia was not due to the children being herded together in barrack schools; but Dr. Stevenson, in his Report published in relation to the year 1894, stated that at Sutton and some other schools he named the percentage of children suffering from ophthalmia was no less than 20 per cent. in one instance, and in others of 14 per cent., 9 per cent., and so on. Dr. Stevenson, in his Report for 1894, said this was to be attributed to the crowding of these children in barrack schools, and the whole volume of Reports given by medical authorities in relation to these schools concurred in attributing the prevalence of ophthalmia in barrack schools to the children being herded together, and to no other cause. Having dealt with the educational standard and the health standard, he turned to the conditions under which these children lived. There could be no doubt their lives were most unhappy. He did not deny that, under the able permanent officials of the Local Government Board, something had been done to mitigate the hardships of their lot, and Boards of Guardians had been impressed with the necessity of making the lives of these children less miserable; but in the Report of the Committee which had been so copiously quoted it would be found that in these schools children were not allowed to enjoy the ordinary advantages of recreation which were offered to the children in elementary schools in the country, and except at Christmas and Easter they had no holidays. They were not allowed to indulge in the ordinary pastimes and pleasures which fell to the lot of children, and doubtless were a great solace to them in the onerous work in elementary schools. An official of the Local Government Board suggested that the children should be allowed to play at hare and hounds or paper chase, but the answer of the Poor Law Guardians was—

> "You forget the rule that some official must be in constant supervision, and we have no official competent to take part in a paper chase."

That was the point of view from which Boards of Guardians and officials approached the treatment of pauper children, and he would say this to the right hon. Gentleman, that, whatever satisfaction was expressed in the House, and however much the right hon. Gentleman expressed a solicitude for these children, which nobody questioned, there was a strong feeling in the country that looked for something more than expressions of empty sympathy, while it was in the power of the Government to stretch forth a hand and make the life of these children more tolerable and render them more fit for the duties of citizenship and manhood. Something had been done, but mainly in a microscopic way. Out of 17,000 pauper children only 968 had been boarded out, and he had a right to ask that the Government should stretch forth a hand and do that which had been done in Scotland, Canada, and in various other countries of the civilised world. Do away with the abominable system of herding these children together in numbers ranging from 100 and 200 to 1,541 children, as in the school at Sutton. It was because he felt very strongly on this matter he had ventured to take part in the Debate. He expressed his recognition of the service rendered by the hon. Member for Islington in bringing this matter forward, but anything more unsatisfactory, anything more delusive than the speech of the right hon. Gentleman it was impossible to conceive. ["Hear, hear!"] He urged the right hon. Gentleman, and every Member of the Government, to recognise the necessity of rescuing these unhappy children from the condition which, since 1846, they had been condemned to live under. ["Hear, hear!"]

SIR ALBERT ROLLIT said he was satisfied with the discussion and the statement of the right Gentleman, and would, with the leave of the Committee, withdraw his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. J. C. FLYNN (Cork, N.) said he had no wish to interpose to delay any other Motion, but there was a question he desired to raise in reference to the Home Office and subordinate offices, and he now proposed to do so by the reduction of the Vote.

MR. COURTENAY WARNER (Stafford, Lichfield) rose to order, and asked was it not possible to continue the discussion on the Local Government Board Vote?

SIR WALTER FOSTER also asked if discussion in relation to the Local Government Board could be renewed?

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS said the hon. Member for North Cork was in possession, and had expressed his intention of moving a reduction on the Home Office Vote. If that hon. Member gave way it would be open to any hon. Member to resume the discussion in reference to the Local Government Board.

SECRET SERVICE MONEY.

MR. FLYNN moved, "That the item of £40,000 for the Home Office be reduced by £1,000."

MR. MICHAEL DAVITT (Mayo, S.) desired to call attention on this Vote to the alleged dynamite plots in September last, and also to the conduct of the Home Office with reference to the trial of Ivory or Bell, which came to such a sensational ending in January last. The atrocious character of those plots, or, rather the statements in the public Press with reference to them, were calculated to do a great injury to Ireland and to the character of the Irish national movement. He alleged that those plots had no real existence, but were, in fact, the creation of disreputable agents of the secret service; that that was the reason why the prosecution of Ivory, or Bell, came to its sensational termination; and, further, he alleged that the Home Office did not make any sincere effort to extradite from Antwerp the alleged prime movers in the plots. The trial came to its fruitless termination because the prosecution were afraid to put into the witness-box the man Jones, the agent of the secret service of the Home Office. If the trial had gone on witnesses would have been produced from Dublin of respectable standing and character, who would have proved to the hilt that between the period of the first examination of the prisoner before the magistrate at Bow Street and the trial, Jones approached two young men of the name of Holland, compositors in the office of the *Evening Telegraph* in Dublin, and actually proposed to them a plan for the commission of outrage. He offered to one of these young men similar detonators to those alleged to have been discovered in the house in Antwerp. In addition, there were three men of respectable standing in the city of New York to prove that Jones had attended meetings of Irishmen in that city and proposed to carry out a series of outrages. One of his plots was to blow up the British Embassy in Washington with dynamite, and another of his suggestions to men whom he met in this society in New York was to assassinate the late Home Secretary, the right hon. Member for East Fife. The witnesses from New York who attended at the Old Bailey were prepared to swear that Jones made those proposals, and for the making of them had been expelled from this particular society in New York. [*Nationalist cheers.*] The Solicitor General said:—

> "I find that the prosecution yesterday" (January 19, 1897) "ascertained that the delivery of these explosives at the house in Antwerp took place after Bell had left Antwerp."

That was not the real explanation of the withdrawal of the charges against Bell. There were other grounds. When the prisoner was before Mr. Vaughan at Bow Street, Mr. Gill, who represented the Crown, said,

> "In consequence of information he (Bell) received on September 3rd he went to Brussels, where he met Tynan, and they went to Antwerp, where Kearney had taken a house, and Haines had procured the necessary chemicals,"

showing that in September the prosecution were prepared to prove that Bell was actually in this house in Antwerp at a time when the chemicals for the manufacture of these bombs had been procured by those persons. More than that, there was produced at Bow Street a man named Goll, a brother-in-law of Kearney, resident in Antwerp, and an agent of the secret service of the Home Office, who stated that on September 5 two men came to the house and that Bell was one of them. The men went upstairs with Kearney, who said, "Come in, I will show you something." This he contended proved the allegation of the Solicitor General at the Old Bailey that they were at that time wanting evidence to show that Bell was in this house in Antwerp at the time these explosives were on the premises. But fancy the Crown with the omnipresent and all but omnipotent Scotland Yard, with all the resources at its disposal, waiting from September until January for proof that these chemicals were not in this particular house at the time Bell was there? He asserted that no really honest effort was made by the Home Office to extradite these alleged dynamite plotters from Antwerp. He did not for a single moment cast the slightest reflection upon the Home Secretary. He felt certain that the right hon. Gentleman would not, directly or indirectly, do anything that would interfere with the course of justice, but he did say that in the evidence that was procurable in Antwerp of a design of some kind upon life, and the finding of these detonators and chemicals and bombs in this particular house, there was every ground upon which the Home Office could have demanded the extradition of these men—[*Nationalist cheers*]—if the officials of the secret service really believed that this was a genuine and not a bogus dynamite plot. The Home Secretary, in reply to a statement of his shortly after the opening of Parliament said, speaking about the allegation that no serious effort was made to bring these men out of Antwerp to justice:—

> "There was no means of getting these men extradited under the law. They made the attempt, but finding, on closer examination, that the offence was not within the Treaty they (the Government) admitted that they had no right to press the demand."

The Home Office was dealing with men under arrest by a friendly Government. If these were genuine plotters of outrage, would the Government of Holland have refused the demand of the English Government to hand these men over to justice? The idea was absurd. They knew what the feeling on the Continent had been as to Anarchists, and to imagine that the Dutch Government would refuse to hand over men caught red-handed in plotting against life and property in this country, was not to be accepted for a moment. He asserted that these alleged plotters were not brought to this country, that the demand was not made on a friendly Government to hand them over because the Secret Service of the Home Office did not want these characters to be brought here, and to be put on trial in London. He would support these allegations by a quotation from the official organ of the Dutch Government on this very point. On the 26th November, Reuter's Agency supplied the following piece of news to the press of these three countries. The item of intelligence was headed, "Release of Kearney and Haynes," and it went on to say—

> "According to the *Amsterdam Handelsblad* the Minister of Justice states that the liberation of the alleged dynamitards Haynes and Kearney, who were arrested at Rotterdam, took place after the British Minister had declared that his Government renounced the idea of demanding extradition, and that therefore the fact of their not being extradited was not due to any defect in the Extradition Treaty between England and Holland, nor in the Netherlands Penal Code."

Now it would be for whoever replies to this allegation to say whether there was foundation or not for this very serious statement by the organ of the Dutch Government. What was in reality the offence that these men were alleged to be contemplating? What was the plot in which it was stated they were engaged? He had here an extract from the *Evening News*, of London, an official organ which supported Her Majesty's Government, which described these men and their alleged offence as follows; and also the house in which they were arrested; the information being supplied by Reuter's Agency:—

> "In the room which they occupied several infernal machines were found, together with a quantity of correspondence, partially torn up. The prisoners at once admitted that they were the individuals wanted by the police, and, although not without considerable difficulty, the Superintendent of Police at length succeeded in obtaining the cypher key to the letters found in the prisoners' possession. It was in consequence of the contents of these letters that Tynan was arrested at Boulogne. They were described as two Anarchists having relations with Anarchists in Glasgow, and it is said that their plans included an attempt upon the life of Queen Victoria."

Paragraphs appeared in the English papers that a plot was contemplated to assassinate the Czar of Russia, who was at that particular time the guest of Her Majesty. Some of them might hold what the majority of Members considered to be peculiar opinions upon the forms of Monarchical Government, but he did not think any of them, no matter what his Republican sentiments might be, could contemplate such a crime as that which was alleged to be maturing at the time without feeling that the men who plotted it should not find shelter in any civilised country. He asked this question of the Committee: Was there any foundation for these alleged plots? Did they really exist? If they did, why was no serious nor determined, no persevering effort made by the Government of this country to hunt down and to bring to justice the authors of these contemplated crimes? His contention was again that it was no real, no *bonâ fide* dynamite plot. He asserted that it began with the agents of the Secret Service and it ended in the Old Bailey, with the ludicrous prosecution against the man Bell. [*Cheers.*] But where did Irishmen come in in this connection? They all knew what a sensation was created last September, when these statements were sent on the wings of the Press throughout the world. He happened to be in Rome at the time, and he found in a newspaper in the stalls of that city, pictures representing the Irishman in Antwerp and Rotterdam manufacturing bombs for the contemplated assassination of the Czar of Russia and the Queen of this country, and the family of the

Prince and Princess of Wales. These statements had gone through the world for months, and he wanted to know what was to be done in atonement for the injury done to the character of the Irish race and the Irish cause. [*Cheers.*] Let him give an instance of how widespread these calumnies had been circulated. He had here the headings from a Coolgardie paper in Western Australia—"The Dynamiters," "Attempt to blow up the Queen," "Dismay of the Nationalists," "A widespread plot," "Tynan expects he will be hanged"—and then followed details of a scheme to destroy the residence of the Prince and Princess of Wales. He said again, that some atonement was due to the race which he humbly spoke for. That race and that people had been to a certain extent morally assassinated through these plots, and he alleged again that these plots began and ended with the agents of the Secret Service of the Home Office. Now, although the trial of Bell came to nothing in January, was no one to be brought to justice in connection with these alleged plots, for the carrying out of these diabolical deeds? Had efforts been made by the Home Office or the Crown since January to get at the real culprits, if they existed, in connection with these infamous plots. They had a right to demand that if there was any information in the possession of the Home Office that would lead to the bringing to justice of any man who contemplated deeds of this kind, they should make every effort to extradite them from any country in which they found asylum. He knew a great deal of America, and he asserted that there was no country in the world where deeds of this character were held in greater abhorrence than in the United States, and if these plots were hatched by anyone who was at present in the United States, he was certain that if a demand was made for the extradition of these men, it would need no new treaty between England and the United States to have them handed over to justice. [*Cheers.*] Men, if they existed, who carried on in cold blood plots and conspiracies of this diabolical character were not entitled to an asylum in any country in the world. If there was any reality in this dynamite plot he held the Home Office was culpable in not having succeeded in bringing someone to justice for it. This was a plot of spies, and the object was one which was not new in the history of the relations between Ireland and this country. It was part of the old infamous practice of carrying on the work of morally assassinating the character of the Irish people. He would suggest to the Home Secretary how he could get all the information in connection with the plot. He would give him the names of no less than seven or eight men who, he ventured to say, knew all about it—Major Jocelin, the head of the Secret Service Department; Captain Stewart Stephens, at one time an employee of the Secret Service; the man Houston, who was identified with the Parnell Commission; James McDermott, the author of the Cork and Liverpool and London so-called dynamite conspiracies; Matthew E. O'Brien, once a distinguished student of Trinity College, and afterwards an employee of the Secret Service; Goll, of Antwerp; J. P. Hines, who also took service under *The Times* on the Parnell Commission, and had been in the pay of the Secret Service for most of his life; and, finally, spy Jones, whom the prosecution did not think it wise to put in the witness-box at the Old Bailey. He submitted he had made out a pretty strong case against the Secret Service Department of the Home Office. These so-called plots and conspiracies in Antwerp and Glasgow were the work entirely of disreputable men in the employment of the Secret Service, and discredit would attach to the Home Office and to the Government until some atonement was made to Ireland and the Irish people in connection with this system of moral assassination. He said candidly that he was not an unprejudiced witness with reference to the Secret Service. He admitted that a Government like that of England, which had to rule so many subject nationalities in different parts of the world, must find it difficult, if not impossible to do without some kind of a secret service. But there ought to be no difficulty on the part of the Government in getting in their employ for this work reputable men—men sufficiently paid for their labour to be above the suspicion of getting up diabolical plots of this kind in order to get grants from the Secret Service. Let something like that be done; let the Home Office take care and precautions that such men as those whose names had been mentioned in connection with this case were not employed in this work; and then, if some such change as that were brought about he thought some good would follow from this discussion. [*Irish cheers.*]

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir ROBERT FINLAY, Inverness Burghs) said that, before the Home Secretary and the Attorney General dealt with the charges which the hon. Gentleman had thought fit to bring against the conduct of the Secret Service Fund and other matters connected therewith, he would ask permission to say a few words with reference to the observations made by way of preface to those charges, inasmuch as those observations related to the conduct of a case which, as one of the Law Officers of the Crown, he was engaged in at the Old Bailey. The hon. Gentleman had thought fit to assert that the real cause why that prosecution was not prosecuted to the end was that the Crown were afraid to put the witness Jones into the box. That statement was absolutely unfounded. [*Cheers.*] The hon. Gentleman went on to say that Jones had been engaged, between the proceedings in the police court and the proceedings at the Old Bailey, in endeavouring to obtain evidence in Dublin, and that there were persons in court prepared to make statements to that effect.

MR. DAVITT said he did not say he was sent to Dublin to obtain evidence. What he said was that he was sent to Dublin to try and induce respectable young men to go into plots of a similar description.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL said he was not in the House at the moment the hon. Gentleman made that statement, and he had misunderstood what he said. All that he could say was that he had never heard before the statement now made by the hon. Gentleman. It was absolutely new to him, and the idea that anything of the kind had any effect on his mind in regard to the withdrawal of the prosecution was absolutely preposterous, and he gave it the most unqualified contradiction. [*Cheers.*] He was not aware that the suggestion had ever been made, and he had not the slightest ground to suppose that anything of the kind was ever said. The hon. Gentleman went on to say that the reason given for the prosecution not being proceeded with could not be the true one. He ventured to think that the suggestions made by the hon. Gentleman were about the weakest that were ever put forward in support of such a charge. The reason why the prosecution was not proceeded with was that, in his judgment, as responsible for the conduct of the prosecution, they were bound to bring home to the knowledge of Bell the existence of these explosives in the house at Antwerp. The hon. Gentleman said that that could not be the reason, and the ground he put forward for that assertion was that Mr. Gill, at the police court, said that there would be evidence available to show that Bell was at Antwerp when the explosives were there. He had not got before him in any report the exact language used by Mr. Gill, but all he could say was that, if that statement was made, they found they had no such evidence, and that it was the want of such evidence, bringing to the knowledge of Bell that these explosives were in that house at Antwerp, that led to the prosecution being dropped.

MR. DAVITT said the witness Goll who appeared before the magistrates in September swore on that occasion that the chemicals were in the house when Bell was there.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL said the hon. Gentleman was really mistaken. His memory had entirely played him false as regarded that matter. The witness Goll gave evidence at the police court. He did not appear at the trial, and his recollection was that it was proved by a medical man of excellent standing and capacity that it was perfectly impossible for him to do so, owing to the state of his health. [*Nationalist laughter.*] Hon. Gentlemen laughed, but it was proved at the trial that owing to his state of health it would have been dangerous for him to come over. Hon. Gentlemen were quite entitled to disbelieve the evidence of a professional man if they thought fit, but he should recommend them, before they derided the evidence given by a medical man of high standing in his profession, to have some other grounds than mere wild suspicion. ["Hear, hear!"] The hon. Gentleman was, he thought, entirely mistaken as to the nature of the evidence which Goll gave in the deposition which, in his absence, was read at the trial. Goll's evidence did not relate to the explosives in the house at Antwerp. He was perfectly certain that Goll said nothing whatever about the explosives in the house at Antwerp. What the hon. Gentleman was referring to, he thought, was the passage in which Goll said that, when these men were at his hotel, one of them said to the other, "Come upstairs and I will show you something." [An Irish Member: "What was the something?"] That did not relate to the house where the dynamite was at all. It related to his being invited to come upstairs at the hotel. What the something was there was no further evidence to show, but he was perfectly certain that that passage had no possible bearing upon the dynamite in the other house at Antwerp, which was in a different part of the town altogether. He had thought it right to intervene at once, and to say that the course taken at the trial was taken by him upon his own responsibility, acting to the best of his judgment, and doing what he thought was fair and right as a Law Officer of the Crown. [*Cheers.*]

On the return of the Chairman of Ways and Means, after the usual interval,

Mr. FLYNN contended that the reduction he moved had been amply justified by the speech of the hon. Member for Mayo. He need not say that there was no charge whatever of complicity direct or indirect on the part of the Home Secretary or the Attorney or Solicitor General, but the fact remained that there was a process of incubation of conspiracy carried on in connection with the Secret Service Fund which was a discredit to the Home Office. The country never knew what value was given for this secret service money or how the money was expended; and it was intolerable that in a country like this where free institutions were supposed to exist, underground conspiracies of this sort could be conducted. He had been connected in a public capacity with an organisation in the county of Cork which was in conflict with the Government of the day, though they feared no reproach from honest men who believed in open and honourable warfare. The very man whose name had been before the Committee came to the city of Cork supplied with money from the Secret Service Fund and with letters of introduction from America. Who was the first man he went to? The chief of the detective department in Dublin Castle. His letters were opened, and the whole thing it was perfectly well known, was inspired from the Home Office. Was it not intolerable that year after year and decade after decade this abominable practice should be carried on? ["Hear, hear!"]

Mr. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): Will the hon. Gentleman say whether five members of the Board of Guardians of Cork were sent to gaol last week for taking money corruptly? [*Laughter.*]

Mr. FLYNN, continuing, said, let these funds be employed honestly in the detection of crime, but surely the Home Secretary ought to shrink from the idea that a single penny should be used in the manner which had been exposed by his hon. Friend. He begged to move the reduction of the Vote. ["Hear, hear!"]

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Sir Matthew White Ridley, Lancashire, Blackpool): I am, of course, responsible, in connection with my office, for the use of a certain amount of secret service money, and I have to make a declaration to the Public Accounts Committee that, to the best of my belief, the money used has been administered in a proper way. That, of course, is the pith of my answer to the hon. Gentleman. I entirely dispute his allegations that there was any real existence in this conspiracy. ["Hear, hear!"] I have information which neither the hon. Gentleman nor any of his Friends can have. I do not for a moment suppose that any hon. Gentlemen opposite are identified with this kind of plot, which was hatched in America. The hon. Gentleman quotes a great number of names of men who, he thinks, have been at the disposal of the Home Office and Secret Service of their country, and whose evidence he said he could produce. I know nothing of them. Of course the hon. Gentleman is quite right. If I did know anything of them, I should not admit it. [*Laughter.*] What is the use of the Secret Service if I did? I am responsible for the administration of this Vote. It is a very disagreeable duty as hon. Members know. ["Hear, hear!"] You have to deal with men who are not those you would desire to meet every day in private life; but what I do say is this, that what anybody in my position has to do, in using this money for the purpose of detecting crime of this sort, is to employ a confidential agent whom you can trust and then to hope and believe and do the best you can, according to the means you have at your disposal, to see that the money is not used in an improper way. Of course, I can only meet with an absolute and emphatic denial the assertion of the hon. Gentleman that there was any reality in this conspiracy. It is my belief, according to information which I have, and which I had at the time, that the police by means of information supplied to them by the agency of the Secret Service, were able to prevent a great crime being committed in the United Kingdom—["hear, hear!"]—and I say that I do not believe that the action of the police, as police, has been challenged. They could have done nothing else, having information of the presence of one of these men in Glasgow, but arrest him, in order to prevent a crime being committed. ["Hear, hear!"] It is as important to prevent the committal of a crime of this sort, which we believed was ripe for execution, as it is to arrest the criminals after its commission—and I believed on my responsibility as a Minister of the Crown, that from information we had, which was, of course, derived from agencies placed at my command through the Secret Service, there was a conspiracy to commit a crime which would have caused the greatest consternation in the United Kingdom, although I gave no credit to the allusions in the newspapers to any particular attempt on the Czar of Russia or Her Majesty. I cannot be too emphatic in asserting, in reply to the hon. Member who says that there was no reality in this conspiracy, that we had evidence of the most decisive character that the men who were arrested were—as we believed, and as I believe—engaged, one or more of them, in a conspiracy of a real and very substantial character which, if carried into effect, would have aroused the indignation of the hon. Member himself and of every hon. Member in this House. [Mr. Davitt: "Why did you not extradite him?"] I am inclined to believe that in answer to a question put by the hon. Member across the floor of the House I may have made a mistake in saying that from the beginning we demanded the extradition of these men. Possibly I was wrong there. What I should have said is that I had to consult the Law Officers—I had to do everything I could to try to get these men over to England in order to have them tried—and that in examination we found that we had no power under the extradition treaties to proceed. I think if I had tried to obtain the extradition of criminals who were not extraditable, the hon. Member and his Friends would have been the first to charge me with attempting to secure from a friendly nation the delivery to justice—false justice as they would have said—of a person who was not really amenable to the laws of this country.

Mr. DAVITT: Did the Government make a direct demand upon the Dutch Government for the extradition of these men?

Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: We informed the Dutch Government that we intended to make that demand. [*Laughter.*] Ought a Government to make a formal demand of that kind without having made a thorough examination into the circumstances? When, as we believed, a crime of this sort is about to be committed, and when you can arrest the men who are going to commit it, you have no time to go into technicalities such as the question whether a man is a citizen of America or not. I went into the whole question with my hon. and learned Friend in order to ascertain what possible power we had under the extradition treaties to secure the delivery of these men who we believed were guilty, and upon being advised emphatically that the extradition treaties did not cover the surrender of these men, of course we did what we ought to do in such cases, and what my hon. and learned Friend did at the Central Criminal Court when he found he could not substantiate the charge against the prisoner—of course, we withdrew. [Mr. Davitt: "Was the demand made?"] If I said across the floor of the House that the demand was made, I dare say that notice was given that we intended to make it; but in order to establish a case for extradition you must prove that you have a right to it.

Mr. DAVITT: Is it not a fact that chemicals were found in the house with these men, and was no demand made for their extradition?

Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: If the hon. Member will consult his legal adviser he will find that under the extradition treaties we have there was no means of demanding the surrender of these men.

Mr. DAVITT: Is it true, as suggested in the extract read by me from an official organ, that the Dutch Government were prepared to hand these men over, but that no demand was made to them?

Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: This is the first time I have heard any such suggestion made, and I should be extremely surprised if there were any truth in it. I assert most emphatically that we were prepared to do our best to get the surrender of these men for trial in this country if we could have got it, because we believed one and all whose extradition we were prepared to demand to be guilty of conspiracy to commit this crime in the United Kingdom. [Mr. Davitt: "And yet you did not ask for their extradition."] I think the hon. Member ought to accept my explanation. I have said that we had every intention to demand extradition. The Foreign Minister, who would have had to demand the extradition, would have acted, if justified, within the limits of the Treaty. I do not like dealing with Secret Service agents—[*Nationalist cheers*]—but if in this case the Secret Service agents were successful—as I believe they were—in preventing a crime, there is some gain to civilisation, as the hon. Member will admit. If I have been wrong there is an end of the matter, and I am in fault. At all events, my belief is that in this particular instance we had convincing proof—proof that would have satisfied any person of fair mind—that a plot was being hatched, which, if not prevented, would have done serious damage to life and property in the United Kingdom. ["Hear, hear!"] I do not know, and it is no business of mine, whether the men who have been charged with participation in this crime—one of whom only was brought to trial—were Irishmen or not. That is not my affair. For any idle gossip in a Coolgardie paper the Government cannot be responsible. The hon. Member tells us that he has seen certain caricatures in an Italian newspaper in Rome casting aspersions on the Irish race. I think the hon. Member ought to bring his charge against the editor of that newspaper, and not against the Government, who have never expressed the belief that Irishmen had anything to do with these men, and who have shown the utmost fairness to every one implicated in this business. I repeat that the Solicitor General, having ascertained that there was not adequate evidence to connect Bell with a particular house on a particular date, did right in not pressing the case unfairly against the prisoner. Surely it is not a matter of complaint against the Government that they showed fairness in dealing with a charge of this character. The hon. Member says that he has a right to demand that the Government shall exercise all the powers they possess to detect criminals who have been engaged in crimes of this description. I hope we shall do so. By all the means in our power we shall try to track to their sources all crimes of this character and to bring to punishment all those whose guilt we can legitimately prove. If it happens from time to time, as in this case, that at the moment of trial we fail through want of a connecting link to bring home guilt to the prisoner, or if we fail because offenders are not extraditable, that is not the fault of the Government or of the police. We believed from the beginning that this was a case which it behoved us to watch most seriously. We did out best to get hold of the men and to bring them to justice, and if we failed at the last moment in connection with the trial of one of them, it was because an English Law Officer in an English Court was scrupulously fair in not pressing the case against the prisoner in the circumstances that arose. ["Hear, hear!"]

*Mr. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.) said that the Home Secretary need not have taken so much trouble to assure the Committee that he had no acquaintance whatever with the persons connected with this dynamite conspiracy. No one on the Opposition side of the House supposed for a moment that any Home Secretary ever had a personal acquaintance with the agents who had, as his hon. Friends and himself maintained, been employed by certain permanent officials in the Home Office or Scotland Yard. The right hon. Gentleman had asserted most emphatically that there was a reality in the conspiracy of September last. He admitted that there was a reality in that conspiracy, but with whom did that reality originate? With whom did it begin? The Nationalist Members maintained that it originated with the employees of the Home Office and Scotland Yard. How was it that Mrs. Tyler had never been arrested for the conspiracy which she went to Dublin to found in 1884. The Nationalist Members had in their possession telegrams sent from the Home Office to this woman at the Gresham Hotel in Dublin, and there were in the possession of Members of the House letters written and signed "Robert Anderson, Home Office," in reference to payments for informer's service.

*THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. GRANT LAWSON): What happened in 1884 is hardly in order on this Vote.

*MR. JAMES O'CONNOR: I was speaking of the policy of the Home Office in regard to these conspiracies, and I say that the conspiracy of last September was only one of a series of conspiracies which have been set on foot in Ireland during the last 15 years. The first was started in 1882 by Mr. James Macdermott, who came over from New York to Dublin, and was in direct communication with Mr. Jenkins of the Castle, and Mr. Dunsterville, his private secretary. Macdermott got up the conspiracy which resulted in the arrest and imprisonment of Dr. Gallagher and others, who had been in prison, and of Flanagan, who was in prison now.

*THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. GRANT LAWSON): The hon. Member must confine himself to something to do with the administration of the Home Office as constituted in the present year.

*MR. JAMES O'CONNOR: But the conspiracy we are discussing did not occur in the present year, it happened last year. Mrs. Tyler offered £500 to any man who would throw a dynamite bomb into that House from the Thames. Sir G. Trevelyan, then Irish Secretary denied all knowledge of Mrs. Tyler. The Nationalist Members did not suggest that the Home Secretary had any knowledge whatever of the agents employed by officials at Scotland Yard or the Home Office. But the conspiracy of last September was got up by agents of the Government, and beyond all doubt with the knowledge of men employed as Government spies in New York. The Government could not deny that Mrs. Tyler was in the pay of the Home Office. Could the Home Secretary deny that Jones was not in the same pay? With the knowledge of Major Gosselin Jones was sent to Dublin last year to get up dynamite conspiracies there. The officials of the Government, without the knowledge of the Home Secretary, had been getting up dynamite conspiracies since 1882, and the last of the series was that of September 1896. It was intended to frighten the Emperor of Russia, probably —a magnificent piece of Imperial policy. But after the exposure in this case they would hardly hear of many more dynamite conspiracies. This little game was exploded at last, and it was time. [*Nationalist cheers.*]

MR. JOHN DILLON (Mayo, E.) said there was one omission in the statement of the Home Secretary which made a sinister impression upon hon. Members sitting on that side of the House. The gravamen of the charge made by the hon. Member for South Mayo was, that it had been for years the established policy of the Home Office to keep in their employment, and in their pay, men who did not scruple, for the detection of crime, to employ methods well-known and recognised in some Continental countries, but which were repugnant to the public opinion of this country. That was, to plan and promote and stimulate and assist in the organisation of crimes for the pretended purpose of preventing them. ["Hear, hear!"] That was the substance of their charge, and the reason why they made so strong a protest against this system was because they believed that if they had recourse to these men, and if they once placed themselves under the influence of men who, under the pretext of preventing or detecting crime, took part in promoting conspiracies for this purpose they could not check the action of these agents, who, for the purpose of showing their usefulness and maintaining the usefulness of their profession, would have to continue to keep up crime in the country where, but for their operations, crime would come to an end. ["Hear, hear!"] What he desired to direct the attention of the Committee to was, that the Home Secretary did display a dislike for the association which was forced upon him by his officers with these people, but he did not deny that it was, and had been, the policy of the Home Office to wink, at least, at these proceedings. [*Cheers.*]

SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: I did deny it. I said that I tried to convince myself that the agents whom I trusted are responsible and honest persons. I do not know anything about the subordinates.

MR. DILLON said that was their point. The officials of the Home Office were supposed by the right hon. Gentleman to be honest and responsible men, but they believed them to be the very reverse. [*Nationalist cheers.*] Some of them they believed to be thorough scoundrels, and they considered that the hon. Member for South Mayo had made out a very strong *primâ facie* case that it was the practice of men in Major Gosselin's employment, entirely without the knowledge of any other Department of Police in this country, particularly where political crime was concerned, to adopt methods which used to be condemned and reprobated as the methods of Napoleon the Third in France—the method of prompting conspiracies for the commission of crime to detect those who committed them. This had gone on from the days of Talbot the informer downwards. It was the established policy of the Government, and there were agents in the employ of the British Government advocating the assassination of the late Home Secretary and other prominent men in this country. The excuse that Major Gosselin would probably give would be, that it was the best way to defeat the intentions of evilly-disposed men. He himself considered it infamous, and although it might sometimes effect its purposes, the price paid for its success was too great. A Government which resorted to such methods put itself on a level with the criminals. The Government had a right to spend Secret Service money to defeat crime, but not to entrap innocent men into the commission of crime or for the promotion of crime. He did not accuse the Home Secretary personally of casting a slur and a stain upon the Irish nation last September. But for the last 15 years every outrage and crime in Ireland had been used as a means of defaming the good name of the Irish people before the civilised world. The men engaged in the Parnell Commission used all the influence of the agents and of the bottomless purse of this country to destroy and blast the character of every man who held Nationalist views in Ireland. It was a mockery to pretend that these conspiracies were not used to turn the public opinion of the world against the Nationalists and their cause in Ireland. They were got up to placard the Irish people as a gang of cowardly murderers and dynamitards before the world. It came well from the secret police of a city like London, where every dynamite outrage or assassination plotted against the Crowned Heads of Europe had been arranged. Despite the cowardly campaign against the good name of Ireland, however, that country could hold its head higher as regarded crime and assassination than any other country in Europe. Year after year they would continue to demand that the Home Secretary of this country should repudiate the abominable policy of using *agents provocateurs*, which they believed was still the policy of Major Gosselin and the secret police.

MR. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.) said he came from that part of Ireland to which Talbot was sent down by the Secret Service Fund. This man attended the chapel where his father and his sisters attended, and although the man was a Protestant, he passed himself off as a Catholic, and swore in the young Catholics of his part of the country and made them sign their oaths with their blood. He suddenly left the neighbourhood, and the next they saw of him was when he was in the witness chair, and a large body of the young men of the neighbourhood were in the dock. He contended that any administration which descended to fraud of that description was unworthy of confidence.

Question put. The Committee divided:—Ayes, 50; Noes, 107.—(Division List, No. 148.)

EASTERN QUESTION.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall) said that the principal points involved in the Eastern Question had of late been very much overlooked. The attention of the House and of the country had been directed to such minor matters as the bombardment which had taken place the other day at Crete, attacks upon the British Admiral, and as to whether the Cretan insurgents had received a certain message or not—all of which were of the most trifling importance in comparison with the great issues at stake. The one great factor of the Eastern Question which had been lost sight of of late was the danger of arousing religious and race fanaticism in the East. For a long period of time reckless and unfounded attacks were made upon the Turkish Government, and every species of insult was addressed to the Sovereign of Turkey. Mussulman fanaticism was thereby aroused, and the result was seen in the terrible deeds which took place in Asia Minor at the close of 1895. In Crete they would see what Christian fanaticism was able to accomplish. Deeds had been done there by fanatical Christians as atrocious as the deeds committed by fanatical Mussulmans in Asia Minor. The whole Moslem population of Crete, with the exception of the few that lived in the towns on the sea coast, had been driven from their homes. Their lands had been taken from them, their houses had been destroyed, and at that moment there were 30,000 Mussulmans in a state almost of starvation in the three seaport towns of Crete to which they had to fly for protection from the Christians. This persecution and enforced exile of the Moslem population of Crete had been accompanied by many horrible scenes of massacre and outrage. Hundreds had been killed, women and children had been outraged, and the whole Moslem population of some of the villages had been burned alive. [*Opposition cries of* "No, no!"] The hon. and learned Member for Dumfries seemed to regard it as a joke that Mussulmans should be burned alive.

Sir ROBERT REID (Dumfries Burghs): I beg the hon. Gentleman's pardon. I was smiling at a remark my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton made to me.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT apologised to the hon. and learned Member. He had heard no word of sympathy or regret expressed from any Gentleman on the other side with regard to outrages on and massacres of these Cretan Mussulmans. The correspondent of *The Standard*, who had probably supplied the most interesting information they had received from Crete, writing the other day from Canea, spoke in this way of the Cretan people:

> "There is no race existing within the borders of civilisation so reckless of human life and so dominated by the passion for blood. . . . It may be opportune to point out to misguided philanthropists that the prostitution of the title of Christian in Crete need not delude anybody with the idea that those who claim it are governed by any of the precepts of Christianity. Any sympathy with these Christians as co-religionists is quite misplaced. They have no religion to speak of and are quite as barbarous as their brethren of the same breed professing Islamism."

There were two great factors which were apt to be overlooked by most hon. Members who had dealt with the Eastern Question during the last three years. The first, which was the humanitarian factor, was the horrible danger of letting loose religious and race fanaticism in the East. The second, which was the political factor, was the tremendous danger to British interests of allowing Russia to get possession of Constantinople. There was not the slightest doubt that if that great Power got possession of Constantinople and the Straits our naval supremacy in the Mediterranean would come to an end, and we should lose the power of holding Egypt and the Suez Canal. There would thus, also, be placed in the hands of Russia the whole fighting material of the Ottoman Empire, and our hold upon India would be gravely menaced. There had been, within the last few days, a very deplorable loss of life at Tokat. [An Hon. Member: "A series of assassinations," *and another* Hon. Member: "A series of massacres."] He waited to hear what had actually happened before he described the occurrence as a massacre, but if it were proved to have been a massacre, he would so describe and denounce it. Immediately that loss of life occurred the Turkish Government acted. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] He believed that, without the loss of 24 hours, the persons responsible for the Government of this place were dismissed and put under arrest, and a Commission, composed of officials against whom nothing could be said, had been appointed to make a thorough investigation into the whole matter. Instead of hon. Members jeering at the Turkish authorities for having acted as they had, they ought rather to encourage them in that action. Hon.

Members, by refusing to credit the Turkish Government with the slightest good motive, were inevitably driving Turkey, either to an absolute alliance and dependence upon Russia, or to such a state of desperation that no one could predict what mischief might happen to those Christians in whom they were interested. For that reason he had always endeavoured in this House and in the country to urge moderation in dealing with and speaking of Turkey. Let the Ambassador at Constantinople be as firm as he pleased in demanding real reforms, but let him be moderate and wise in his representations, and let hon. Gentlemen opposite be wise and moderate in their attacks on the Turkish Government. With regard to the Cretan question, there had probably never been an instance in this country in which a large portion of the public mind had been so completely misled and deluded as in regard to this question. The idea of hon. Gentlemen opposite, and an idea which he believed had a considerable number of followers in the country, but not so many as possibly hon. Gentlemen opposite thought, was that the Cretan Christians were at this time a poor suffering people, and that the Greeks had gone to Crete to defend Cretan liberties. That was the exact opposite of the truth. ["Hear, hear!" *and laughter.*] The Cretan Christians were not oppressed at the present time, and had not been for some years. They were themselves at present the oppressors and the persecutors. In every insurrection which had taken place in Crete in the last thirty years the Mussulman inhabitants had suffered most, and in the last insurrection three times as many Mussulmans were killed as Christians. The Greeks went to Crete to prevent autonomy, which was secure. [Mr. DILLON: "No, no!"] It had been conceded by the Sultan and guaranteed by the Powers. Hon. Members might not trust the promises of the Turkish Government with regard to a wild district in Asia Minor, where the Powers could not intervene; but with regard to an island like Crete, it was impossible for promises guaranteed by the Powers to be broken.

MR. DILLON: They were broken.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: They were not broken.

MR. DILLON: They were broken.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT said that there was nothing to show that but the statement of the hon. Member, who, on this subject, was capable of stating almost anything. The Cretan Christians were delighted with the pledges given to them, and accepted them cheerfully, but autonomy was the one thing dreaded by Greece, who wanted annexation. Greece was a needy, bankrupt country, and Crete was to be a sort of milch cow. The prospect of autonomy precipitated Greek intervention. Greece sent over agitators and writers, who were common in Greece. Those Greeks who were averse to a severe form of work took either to newspaper writing or to the legal profession, and when those professions failed they went on buccaneering expeditions to Crete. The Austrian Government at this point made a wise proposal to the Powers—that a naval cordon should be placed round the island to keep out the agitators and the arms. That proposal was accepted by all the Powers but Great Britain. [MR. COURTNEY: "Hear, hear!"] Did that cheer mean that the right hon. Gentleman disapproved of the Austrian Government's suggestion? [MR. COURTNEY: "Oh, yes."] The right hon. Gentleman must know that now, when all the mischief had been done, a blockade had been established after all. Six months ago that step might have averted all the dangers and bloodshed; but it was prevented by a little splutter of agitation in this country. The conduct of the Turkish Government in regard to Crete had been admirable since last year. [*Cries of* "No!"] Did anyone deny that? [*Cries of* "Yes!" *and* "Certainly."] Matters were promising to settle themselves, when the Greek Government sent soldiers to Crete, and then the trouble and terrible massacres of Mussulman Cretans began. Greece had simply been trying to blackmail Europe, and to extort the concession of annexation from the fear of European war. Crete itself would be more happy under autonomy than under annexation to Greece. But Greece had mustered a large army on the Thessalian frontier and had compelled Turkey to do the same. At any moment some rash act might precipitate a tremendous struggle on the frontier, which might end in European war. Such ambition and greed on the part of Greece was unjustifiable. Most Members would be very glad to know that the Concert of Europe, or the federation of Europe, was still maintained. It was not an ideal arrangement for dealing with burning political questions. Personally he had always much favoured an alliance between England and the Powers with whom our interests coincided, which would enable Great Britain to pursue her just policy with effect, but that policy was practically impossible after the mistakes of the late Radical Government in the East. The attempt of that Government to coerce Turkey in conjunction with Russia and France, two Powers that would not and could not genuinely support our policy in the East, had unfortunately alienated our natural allies in Europe, so that for the moment the restoration of the old understanding, which had so long preserved the equilibrium of power in Europe, was impossible; therefore, in view of the fact that there was great danger of a European war, and above all, in view of the awful miseries which would threaten the populations of south-eastern Europe if once war broke out, probably the Concert was the only means of dealing with the difficult questions that arose. He hoped that hon. Gentlemen who were so ready to encourage Greece in her rash and dangerous attitude had not forgotten what war meant in the south-east of Europe to the helpless populations there. The great war between Germany and France was, so far as non-combatants were concerned, conducted with remarkable humanity, but very different would a war be in the south-east of Europe. Take the case of Macedonia alone, which, in the event of war, would become the cockpit of south-eastern Europe. In Macedonia there were now four Christian races ready and almost longing to fly at each other's throats, and only kept from fighting by the dominating power of the Turks, and Heaven only knew what would happen if the forces of disorder were once let loose. He read the other day in *The Daily News* a remarkable letter from Athens. It was not a paper he placed reliance on generally, but in reference to recent events in the East its information had been good. The letter contained a most touching and pathetic statement—a terrible statement as to what the spring might bring in that country, in Macedonia, where, on a signal given, five armies would begin to march, and what would be the fate of the helpless population, non-combatants, women and children, was terrible to think of. Therefore, though the Concert of Europe might be a slow and heavy method of dealing with the question, and though its action was beset with difficulties and dangers, yet, as a security against a terrible war, it well deserved support, and he congratulated Her Majesty's Government upon having so far kept the Concert of Europe together. He hoped no menaces from the other side of the House, no threats of agitation, no false, no sham sentiment, would lead Her Majesty's Government to do anything to break up that European accord which, so far as could be seen, was the only means of preventing an outbreak of war in the East.

MR. J. MORLEY (Montrose Burghs): I do not rise for the purpose of defending the late Radical Government against the criticisms of the hon. Gentleman, who has exercised, as usual, his gift of making foreign affairs attractive and fascinating to those who listen to him. He warns the Government not to listen to what he is pleased to call a little splutter of agitation, and he also warns them, not confining his remarks to the late Government, he warns the Government to listen to himself and on no account to pay attention to the feelings of the rest of the country. Now, I propose to come to a little closer quarters, if I may, with the Government, than the hon. Gentleman has. The hon. Gentleman has said, speaking of the autonomy of Crete, that it was secured, guaranteed, and accepted some considerable time ago.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: In August.

MR. J. MORLEY: Very well; that is a proposition I entirely traverse, and on that particular matter—namely, the autonomy of Crete—I desire to make a few observations. I do not think the Government will be surprised, or can complain, if on an occasion like this, one of the not too numerous occasions the forms and practice of the House allow us for bringing these important matters before the attention of the House, if we take this occasion for inviting the Government to give us some elucidation on some points of their Cretan and Eastern policy which I confess at present I find extremely obscure and difficult to comprehend. I am not going to-night to attempt any rhetoric. I wish to subject the situation to what I hope will be a perfectly cool analysis. I hope we shall not be misled by what the hon. Member has said about the Concert of Europe. I do not wish to embark on that subject to-night, beyond observing that the phrase which the Prime Minister launched the other day about the federation of Europe is, to my mind, a sonorous, but a hollow, misleading phrase. I should not have referred to that but that the hon. Member laid stress upon it. Now let us see how far we are agreed as to the facts and as to the propositions affecting the present situation in Crete. First of all, there will be no difference among us as to this, that it is the intention of the Government, that it is the resolution of Her Majesty's Government, that Crete is to be freed absolutely in its future government from any effective intervention by Turkey. Then there arises, in the next place, the alternatives of annexation to Greece, on the one hand, and what Her Majesty's Government and the Powers call autonomy on the other hand; and Her Majesty's Government have said that, owing to their position and in view of the decision of the Powers, autonomy is the only policy they can consider practicable. But they do not consider in the present state of circumstances that union of the Greeks of the Hellenic Kingdom to the Cretans of Greece is a practicable policy. Lord Salisbury has recommended Greece to remember that the ulterior result of the present circumstances may well be that annexation of Crete to Greece may take place, if desired by the Cretan population. We are assured by the Government that autonomy is the keyword of their present policy. I am afraid that, as far as we have any means of yet knowing, autonomy is nothing more than a word and a phrase. I will call the attention of the Committee to a reply of the Porte, dated March 14, upon this subject. In that dispatch the Sublime Porte say that—

> "the principle of the granting of autonomy to Crete has been admitted, the Imperial Government only reserving to itself to discuss its form and details with the Ambassadors."

["Hear, hear!"] Of course every single Member of the House, not excepting the hon. Member, will recognise that the principle of autonomy is perfectly meaningless, is void of all practical political significance, until we know what is the form and what are the details with which that general principle is to be worked out. Now, where are we? We are at a date not a fortnight from the date of that dispatch, and at that date it is perfectly certain from the language there used that there had not been an effective discussion between the Porte and the six Ambassadors. If the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary or the First Lord is able to assure us that an effective discussion has been going on since the 14th March, has gone on to such a point that they can tell us to-night that there is a scheme of autonomy in existence to which the Porte has consented, and as to which the Powers are agreed, I will admit they have made a substantial advance. It is quite true that one of the French Ministers, I think M. Méline, the other day said "the *régime* of autonomy for Crete is in working order." Well, I have not seen the original French, and I do not know therefore what the language of M. Méline may have been, but if "the *régime* of autonomy for Crete is in working order" we shall be very much interested to hear from the representatives of Her Majesty's Government to-night what sort of shape that working order has assumed. The language of the dispatch I have quoted shows that the whole of the form and details of autonomy is left an open question, and that what is going on, if anything is going on, is that performance with which we are only too familiar—six Ambassadors at Constantinople meeting one another day after day and week after week and trying to hit upon some scheme which perhaps the Porte may agree to. So far as we know, I can only repeat that autonomy is a mere word and a mere phrase, and has been clothed with none of the attributes of a real effective constitution. Now let us advance a further step. It is undeniable that the vast majority of the insurgent Cretans have repeatedly declared—they may be right or may be wrong, but we are now dealing with the actual state of things—that they repudiate autonomy as the solution of the present situation. This means that the Cretan insurgents reject the proposals of the Powers, or are prepared to reject the proposals when laid before them.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: What is the proof of that?

MR. J. MORLEY: The hon. Gentleman is the last person who should demand proofs, but the fact is perfectly obvious from the whole attitude of the insurgents towards the Admirals. They are at this moment so little predisposed to accept your proposals that they are at this moment in effective military antagonism to the Powers. [*Cheers.*]

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Will the right hon. Gentleman allow me to explain? The only evidence of the statement he has just made is that some five or six Cretan chiefs, under the influence of Colonel Vassos and his brigade, who are close to Canea, are said to have stated that they were opposed to autonomy. There is no other evidence whatever.

MR. J. MORLEY: If that be so, it will be a very simple matter indeed—I daresay the hon. Member would not shrink from undertaking it—to reduce Crete to perfect order. ["Hear, hear!"] It will be no wonder if the Government do not disclose to us the form and details of the scheme, because it is evidently a scheme to be imposed upon the Cretans against their wishes. A more astonishing paradox, I think, has never been seen in modern European politics than the paradox of the present situation. You admit, by every word that any Member of Her Majesty's Government has used, that Crete has got a claim to autonomy—that is to say, to a government which will represent the wishes of her own people, and which the Cretan people will consent to work. The paradox is this—that you are imposing your autonomy upon the Cretans—how? By starving, by blockading, and occasionally by bombarding them. [*Laughter.*] You are to compel a population who have faith in their own freedom and autonomy to accept a form of government which they tell you they reject. I call that a monstrous paradox. It used to be said in the French Revolution by the lovers of Fraternity, "*Soyez mon frère ou je te tue;*" and here you are saying to the Cretans, "Unless you agree to govern yourselves as we wish, we will starve, blockade, and bombard you." [*Cheers.*] I call that a paradox which ingenious Gentlemen who sit opposite will, I dare say, be able to throw some light upon. I want to know from the Government whether this policy of paradox is one for which the fleet of Great Britain is to be employed to carry out? Is it a policy that a British Ministry can be expected to pursue? Lord Salisbury has admitted that the ulterior solution may possibly, and very probably, be annexation; and, therefore, the Government are now, unless they enlighten us, so far as we can judge from appearances, engaged in carrying out a policy which they believe not to be a policy that will ultimately bring peace to Crete, but a policy against their own real conviction, as it is most assuredly a policy against the sympathies and the convictions of the majority of the people of this country. [*Cheers and* "No, no!"] I do not think that many hon. Members on either side of the House—I do not see why this should be a matter of Party division—[*Ministerial cheers*]—would like to face their constituents and to say that, while we declare that the Cretans ought to have autonomy and to choose their Government, and because they do not at once accept the form of government the Powers think best for them, we are right in using the British fleet to starve, blockade, and bombard them. Let us go a little further. Let us admit the principle of your policy, which I submit is an extremely difficult thing to do. Will the Under Secretary or the First Lord of the Treasury explain to us how this policy is to be practically carried out? In practice as in principle I declare that I cannot make out how autonomy, which means self-government, can be worked without the co-operation of the people who are to be made autonomous. You must have the good will and the sympathy and the co-operation of the people. And at the end of your starving, blockading, and bombarding, what is to happen? How far will you have travelled along the road? Let us examine what it means. You must, I suppose, under an autonomous system have institutions—legislative, administrative, representative. But how are those institutions going to be worked by a people who do not want those institutions, but who want something quite different? That is a plain and practical question which perhaps the Under Secretary will be able to answer. The Cretans will certainly be unlike anyone else whom I have read of if they do not at once set to work, even supposing you had at once reared this system, to overthrow a scheme which they bitterly distrust, and which they will be the first to declare to be wholly repugnant to their deepest sentiments. There is a point, moreover, on which I invite the Government to throw some light in the practical working out of this extraordinary policy of autonomy against the will of the autonomous—the governor. Who is he to be? Is he to be a Turk? I presume not. That would be too great a scandal. Is he to be a Greek? If the governor is to be a Greek you may as well not make two bites of a cherry, but let them have annexation and union at once. Is the governor to be taken from one of the six Powers? Suppose you get a governor from one of the extraneous Powers, who is to keep him in his seat? I presume some foreign military force. A pretty kind of autonomy—[*cheers*]—to set over them a foreigner by whom they do not want to be governed, and to prop him up by some foreign force! Reference has been made to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and there we have been told what Lord Beaconsfield called the "consolidation of the Turkish Empire" went on—in plain English, a large tract of territory was happily withdrawn from Turkish dominion and was governed with great success and efficiency by Austria. I will take the liberty of pointing out that there is a great difference in the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the situation in Crete to-day. In Bosnia and Herzegovina 19 or 20 years ago there was no outside centre towards which the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina was gravitating. But that is not the case here. Here the Cretan population has got a centre to which it is gravitating—namely, Greece. When the Austrians went into Bosnia and Herzegovina they were welcomed as deliverers. [*Ministerial cries of* "No."] When you point to the success of the Austrian annexation—I will call it for short—of Bosnia and Herzegovina, you must remember that the people had no strong outside affinities which they were bent on regarding and preserving at all cost. But in Crete there is a kingdom outside to which they have a strong affinity of race, of sentiment, and now of gratitude. The situation is perfectly different. The Austrians were welcomed in Bosnia and Herzegovina because they were deliverers. What you are now doing is to make a kind of war upon the deliverers, and yet you say there is a parallel between this and the Bosnian and Herzegovinian situation. This phrase autonomy deserves, I believe, at this stage in the public discussion to be analysed in a way in which it can only be effectively done in this House. I have spoken of the Governor, and of the fallacy of the parallel with Bosnia and Herzegovina. There was another point which comes to all States and to all individuals—the point of money. ["Hear, hear!"] The British Government are alleged to have made a proposal—I do not think we are officially informed of it—to the Powers to subscribe £10,000 apiece. A sort of subscription list has been opened under the auspices of Her Majesty's Government, and you are to see this extraordinary spectacle. Autonomy is going to be established in the country, but, as a condition antecedent or concurrent with autonomy, a sort of opening up of a subscription list—you are to have a condominium of the six Powers and a condominium subscription to work the autonomy. I do not think a more absurd idea has ever been launched, and I, for one, shall be glad if the Government will be able to say that they never identified themselves with any such proposal. The upshot of it all is this—that you are prolonging an intolerable situation in order to obtain an utterly unworkable and impracticable end. ["Hear, hear!"] The hon. Member spoke of the dangers of conflagration in Macedonia and elsewhere. It is too true that these dangers appear to be coming very near; but, if there is danger of this grand conflagration in Eastern Europe, will it not occur to those who watch things very closely from day to day that it is by the determination of the Powers, the obstinate and, as I think, the unreasonable determination of the Powers, not to allow that union between the Greeks in the kingdom and the Greeks in the island of Crete which the Greeks in the kingdom and the Greeks in the island desire? I invite the Government, if they will be so kind, to answer this question—What are the grounds, stated in plain words, of reason and of policy for the determination about so secondary a matter which can evidently only be persisted in at the risk of jeopardising interests that are not secondary at all, but are essentially of first European magnitude? Every day since this stubborn and unreasonable determination has been arrived at, and has been endeavoured to be carried out, it has been more and more clear that this determination it is which is leading, apparently somewhat rapidly, to what may prove a great danger to European peace. If the Powers had wished to bring about the very crisis which they and all of us have been deploring and dreading the prospect of, this perverse quarrel with Greece is the very means to kindle the flames. As for Crete, we are told that the object of this bombarding and starving was to preserve order in Crete. Read all the accounts of what is going on in Crete! A more desperate and tenacious struggle one has never seen. It is a ludicrous position—it would be ludicrous if it was not so grave—into which the policy of the Powers has brought the Powers. Some people talk of making a golden bridge for the retreat of the Greeks. It looks to me as if a much more desirable thing would be the construction of a golden bridge for the Powers themselves. The difficulties are all due to the fundamental absurdity of imposing upon Crete, in the name of autonomy, some scheme or another which the people of the island refuse to accept. I confess I cannot see that one single step has been taken which is calculated to bring about either of the two things which the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury so tersely described—the freedom of Crete and the peace of Europe. It seems to me that the present situation is as unpromising for freedom in Crete and the peace of Europe as any situation which could possibly be brought about. [*Cheers.*]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I have listened with extreme surprise to the speech which has just been delivered—surprise partly founded on the matter of the speech, and partly on the occasion on which the right hon. Gentleman has thought fit to deliver it. [*Cheers.*] The right hon. Gentleman complains of us because, in dealing with an island in a state of disorder which we have not produced, we are not prepared to give to him and his Friends a detailed account of the autonomous constitution under which I hope that island will for many years have a prosperous and flourishing existence.

MR. J. MORLEY: I never asked for details; but will the right hon. Gentleman tell us that the constitution is ready, and, if so, what it is?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: The right hon. Gentleman asks whether we have got a grand new constitution in our pigeon-hole for an island which he knows is in a state of disorder—a state of disorder which we have not produced—an island in which there is a minority of the very existence of which, you would suppose, the right hon. Gentleman has never heard—[*cheers*]—who are certainly not Cretans by religion or sympathy, but, after all, are human beings—[*cheers*]—and the safety of whom and their property, one would think, might have some claim even upon the right hon. Gentleman. Of course, it is obvious to everybody that the folly of coming forward at this moment, with Crete in the condition in which it is, with an elaborately prepared constitution, or even to go through the form of preparing an elaborate constitution till order is restored, is more the policy of speculative theorists than of practical statesmen. The right hon. Gentleman has talked about certain conditions laid down by the Porte with regard to autonomy in Crete. Of this I can assure him, that the Powers who have taken in hand the task of providing for the freedom of Crete will not be bound by the views of anybody but themselves. [*Cheers.*] That task they have taken in hand, and mean to carry through. The right hon. Gentleman tells us that the Cretans are so strenuously determined against any form of Home Rule that they are prepared to resist to the utmost, by arms and permanently, any attempt to impose upon them that form of government which under other circumstances finds so much favour with the right hon. Gentleman. [*Cheers.*] He apparently looks forward to a series of years during which, for no other object whatever than to spite the Great Powers, the Cretans are going to misgovern themselves. The right hon. Gentleman speaks of paradoxes, but of all paradoxes ever uttered in this House that is surely the most extraordinary and the most unreasonable. [" Hear, hear ! "] The question of Crete is but a fragment of the general policy of the Great Powers of Europe as regards the East of Europe. It cannot be considered in isolation, but it must be considered, and it can only be judged, as part of the greater and more important whole. The right hon. Gentleman says that that policy is one which does not command the approval of the people of this country. The course of an Opposition who believe that the policy of the Government does not command the approval of the country is a plain and obvious one, imposed upon them by all the traditions of English Parliamentary life. [*Cheers.*] We have had three discussions on this Cretan and European question on Motions for the Adjournment of the House—from the very nature of the case inconclusive discussions. Do not let us add to them a fourth discusion as inconclusive as either of the three predecessors. Let us have this question out. [*Cheers.*] Let us have done with this niggling criticism—[*cheers*]—and these paltry questions. The broad outlines of our policy are before the House and the country. The right hon. Gentleman says that the country has already judged. Let him give the House also an opportunity of judging. [*Cheers.*] I have already told the Leader of the Opposition, whose absence we all regret—[" hear, hear ! "]—that he had only to ask for a day for a vote of censure, and that day will be given without any delay whatever. [*Cheers.*] Until that request is made, and until that day is given, I must certainly, so far as I can at all events exercise such authority as I possess, prevent the Opposition hampering the Government in the policy which it is endeavouring to pursue in the East of Europe, without putting before the country in plain and intelligible terms an alternative to that policy. [*Cheers.*] Let the country choose between the two, and, whichever policy it supports, let that policy be carried out from beginning to end courageously, clearly, and consistently. [*Cheers.*] One thing I desire, not in the interest of Party or even in the interests of this country itself, but in the interests of Europe and of mankind. It is that whatever policy we support in this country shall have, at all events as far as we can secure it, the approval of the people of this country behind it by the declared vote of their representatives. [*Cheers.*] I hope the right hon. Gentleman will either screw up his courage to the point of asking for a day for a vote of censure—[*cheers*]—or that he will abandon this practice of night after night criticising small fragments of the Government policy, without bringing forward an indictment of that policy—an indictment which I can most truly assure him we are only too desirous to see him make, and to which we are prepared at a moment's notice to give what we at all events conceive to be a full and conclusive answer. [*Loud cheers.*]

MR. HENRY LABOUCHERE (Northampton) felt it his duty to defend the Leaders of the Opposition from the charge that, after so excellent a speech, such a militant speech, as had been made by the right hon. Member for Montrose, he would not propose a vote of censure. He knew perfectly well he would. [*Laughter and a voice,* "When?"] An hon. Gentleman said "When?" He did not seem to understand that great bodies moved slowly, particularly bodies made up of machinery and a vast number of wheels that had to be brought into harmonious action. [*Laughter.*] He hoped his right hon. Friend would speedily move a vote of censure from that Bench. They would all be delighted to vote for it on that side. The Leader of the House had invited the Front Bench to move a vote of censure, and he was only sorry that he did not invite him. [*Laughter.*] If the right hon. Gentleman had thrown that challenge down to him his answer would have been, "To-mórrow." They desired to protest by their voice and votes against what was at present going on. If he could not get a day, he would seize the present opportunity, and he intended to conclude with an Amendment which stood in his name to reduce the salary of Lord Salisbury. [*Loud laughter.*] It was not at all personal. [*Renewed laughter.*] It was the only vote left to them. There had been contradictions upon the part of the Leader of that House and the Leader of the House of Lords. One evening a statement was made in the House of Lords, and almost immediately the reverse was stated by the Leader of the House of Commons. ["Hear, hear!"] They were told by the Leader of the other House that if the country wanted to know what was going on, they would do well to refer to the excellent speech of M. Hanotaux in the French Chamber. It appeared that, according to the views of Her Majesty's Government, they had not only no right to discuss these matters in the House of Commons, but also no right to discuss them outside. His right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition made a very excellent speech the other day at Norwich, a speech that was certainly approved of by every Liberal in the country, but what did the President of the Local Government Board say of it? The right hon. Gentleman said:—

> "He owned when he read the speech of Sir William Harcourt at Norwich, he thought it almost an outrage on public decency. [*Laughter.*] A speech more unworthy of a man in his position or of the occasion, or more calculated to mislead or deceive the English public or more thoroughly intended to embarrass the English Government at a great crisis in its political affairs, was surely never made.

[*Ministerial cheers.*] Hon. Gentlemen opposite cheered those sentiments. Naturally they objected to a speech which embarrassed Her Majesty's Government, but he delighted in that speech because it did embarrass the Government. [*Laughter.*] It was made with that aim and object. [*Cheers.*] The Opposition believed that the action of Her Majesty's Government in Crete was to the dishonour of the country, and surely they were simply doing their duty in embarrassing and hindering the Government in that action. ["Hear, hear!"] When Mr. Gladstone denounced the action of the Government in regard to the Bulgarian outrages, and their subsequent action in respect to the Treaty of San Stefano, Conservative newspapers and orators said the thing was indecent. But what did the public say? When there came an election out went the Government bag and baggage—[*laughter*]—and Mr. Gladstone was put in their place; and he had no doubt the next General Election would have a similar result. ["Hear, hear!"] It really had come to a pretty pass if those who objected to the English arms being used to defend the integrity of the Turkish Empire against the Cretans and Greece, were to be looked upon as dolts and idiots and indecent persons. [*Laughter.*] Surely they had a right to their opinions. They knew perfectly well that Armenia had been harried for two years, and its inhabitants massacred by the Sultan, that the Concert of Europe did nothing to prevent it, and at the present moment no scheme of reforms for Armenia had been settled. The Cretans applied to the

Powers, and the Powers submitted a scheme of reform for Crete, and yet things in the island were worse than before, because the Sultan seemed to think that the Cretans had offended his dignity by applying to the Powers, and he misgoverned them worse than ever. The Cretans rose and the Greeks, to their honour be it said, sent troops to their aid. The country was in the possession of the Cretans and Greeks, and if the Great Powers had not interfered, at this very moment all connection between Turkey and Crete would probably have ceased. Then and then alone the Powers interfere.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. GEORGE CURZON, Lancashire, Southport): We were there before.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Yes, but they only looked on and did nothing. The first practical action they took was when the Greeks arrived in the island. Then the Powers bombarded the Cretans. [*Cheers.*] Then came all these Notes to Turkey and Greece. Probably they would not have been told the contents of those Notes by Her Majesty's Government, but other Governments were more communicative, and the Notes were published in foreign journals. First there was an agreement between Turkey and the Great Powers. The Powers pledged themselves to maintain the integrity of the Turkish Empire in regard to Crete, and in return for that Turkey pledged herself to give autonomy. Then the Governments sent a Note to Greece, saying that unless the Greeks withdrew their ships from Cretan waters, and their men from the island, they would hesitate at no effort of coercion in order to force compliance with their requirements. How did the Government begin their coercion? By the blockade last Sunday. One Greek vessel had already been sunk by the blockading forces. We had landed troops in Crete, and by the blockade the aim and object of the Government was to starve the unhappy people into surrender, the importation of food being prevented. This they were told was a police measure, but it was a police measure unquestionably undertaken in the name of Turkey, because the Great Powers had no right to engage in police measures in Turkish waters. Then there had been another bombardment. It appeared also that our troops aided the Turkish troops in the garrison towns, and allowed them to go out and pillage and ravage the neighbouring villages. They were told in the newspapers that possibly the Government would not blockade the Piræus, but would leave that to other Powers. He did not see that such abstention amounted to much, for if we blockaded the Cretan ports, although we left it to other Powers to blockade the Piræus, our forces would still practically be employed against Crete and Greece. All these things filled with indignation those who had still some regard for the honour of England, and their indignation was intensified by the grounds given by the Government for their action. Two pleas were put forward by the Government in mitigation. One was based on the proposal for autonomy. They were told that the Great Powers were prepared to give autonomy to Crete, but no one had ever yet explained definitely what that autonomy was to be At present it was a case of *Quot homines, tot sententiæ.* Upon this subject he doubted whether the Powers were in unison. He could very well imagine that the Russian Government and the German Government entertained very different views in regard to liberty from those which the British Government entertained, or, rather, ought to entertain. The Cretans had already had dire experience of the interference of the Great Powers. They were told that all their troubles were to disappear under the scheme of reforms of last year, but, having found that under that scheme they were worse off than before, they naturally wished to put an end to their connection with the Turkish power once and for all. He had been under the impression during the last two years that any subject of the Sultan who rebelled deserved the sympathy of Englishmen. At any rate, both political parties had said so, and that we should now be engaged in supporting the Turkish Government against the Cretans showed the irony of fate. He would like to know what benefit resulted from the maintenance of the Concert of Europe? The theory of the Concert of Europe was that the Great Powers who signed the Treaty of Paris had in some way made the integrity of the Turkish Power the common law of Europe. But was a treaty of that kind worth anything after it had lasted 40 years?

According to Her Majesty's Government, if hostile action were taken by the Concert of Europe to defend the integrity of the Turkish Empire, everyone connected with the Concert was bound to take part. The leading spirits of the Concert of Europe were the three Emperors, and he was not surprised that the three Emperors and the Sultan should be in favour of the divine right of the Sultan and the Emperors. Why should we become the jackals of the three Emperors and the Sultan to take arms against men whom we believed to be absolutely in the right? He believed the policy of the Liberal Party was that, if we could only remain in the Concert of Europe by attacking Crete and Greece and maintaining the integrity of the Turkish Empire, it was our business to retire from the Concert without troubling ourselves in the least as to the consequences. [*Opposition cheers and Ministerial laughter.*] They were told there would be war all over Europe. But who was going to fight against us if we did not fight against them? ["Hear, hear!" *and cheers.*] According to the President of the Local Government Board, we were not to retire from the Concert of Europe because it would cause "great and natural resentment" among the Powers of Europe. This was an English Minister! He could understand a Russian or German Minister or a Grand Vizier—[*laughter*]—uttering such sentiments. Hon. Members opposite who talked so grandly about the power of England called him and his Friends "Little Englanders." But they were the smallest and—if they would forgive him—the most contemptible Little Englanders themselves, because they were so absolutely afraid of the resentment of the Great Powers of Europe that, rather than risk that resentment, they were prepared to do the dirtiest work they could be put to. [*Cheers and Ministerial cries of* "Oh!"] Yes; it was dirty work. Hon. Members opposite apparently did not approve of it, but Liberals went further, and said it was dirty and disgraceful work for England to do. He had put on the Paper an Amendment to reduce the salary of Lord Salisbury. [*Laughter.*] This was a Vote on account, therefore they might put the salary to the Suspense Account. It could be restored if Lord Salisbury mended his ways and recognised the voice of England which was speaking in many ways. If Lord Salisbury accepted the view of the great majority of his fellow-countrymen, they did not ask him at the present moment to make war for Greece. "Sufficient unto the day was the policy thereof." They only asked him to stay his hand, and refuse to make war any longer against either Cretans struggling to be free or against Greece, which was rightly aiding them. [*Cheers.*] The hon. Member concluded by moving his Amendment.

Mr. T. W. LEGH (Lancashire, Newton) said hon. Members opposite were unduly exercised over the word "autonomy." They seemed to think the Cretans would not understand what autonomy meant. "Autonomy" was a Greek word—["hear, hear!"]—and if hon. Members opposite could not realise what it meant, it was extremely improbable that the Greeks themselves would fail to do so. Hon. Gentlemen opposite not so long ago advocated autonomy for an island nearer home, and at that time they never succeeded in getting details from them. Then they were told that even if autonomy were granted the Sultan might spoil it by his interference. That was not a probable event, as the Sultan would not retain any power over the island. He hoped his right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury would continue to refuse to give any details as to the scheme of autonomy, as this did not appear to be necessary. He wished to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs why, in view of the action which this country, in common with the rest of Europe, found itself obliged to take, the Greeks were permitted to land these troops in the first instance? ["Hear, hear!"] When he made this inquiry the other day his right hon. Friend replied that the Greeks were able to land them because they were not opposed, and this answer was regarded as clever and humorous. He confessed he failed to see the humour of it, and he thought he was entitled to ask for an answer.

*Sir C. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) thought that those of them who held the strongest opinion that the course on which this country was at present engaged was contrary to national honour and national interests had some right to complain of the manner in which this discussion had been left by those responsible for the arrangements of the House. Their own Party were as much to blame as were the Government. He supposed the Government would refuse them any further opportunity of discussing this question if their own Front Bench did not move a Vote of Censure. ["Hear, hear!"] He ventured to say, however, that the vast majority of the Party which sat on that side of the House were not responsible if their Front Bench did refuse to move a Vote of Censure. He supposed the Government intended to closure this Vote. Some of them had been taunted for the convictions which they held, while they had been denied an opportunity of defending themselves. The Under Secretary of State had told the House that for 100 years the Cretans had been asking for autonomy. He denied that statement root and branch. He had watched the affairs of Crete most carefully since 1867, and all through Crete had asked for annexation to Greece, and that was what Crete asked for now. Those of them who held the strongest convictions on this subject, by the action of the leaders on both sides had been denied an opportunity of defending those convictions.

Mr. FLYNN asked whether it was quite necessary that the Government should get this Vote? Surely some further opportunity should be given of discussing the matter.

Mr. PHILIP STANHOPE (Burnley) said that they on that side of the House were quite determined that this matter should be further considered at the earliest possible date. [*Ministerial cheers.*] In order that there should be an opportunity for further discussion, he begged to move that Progress be reported.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY claimed to move "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 130; Noes, 48.—(Division List, No. 149.)

Question put accordingly, "That the Item of £22,000, for the Foreign Office, be reduced by £1,666."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 44; Noes, 128.—(Division List, No. 150.)

Sir C. Dilke.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY claimed, "That the original Question be now put."

Original Question put accordingly.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 128; Noes, 44.—(Division List, No. 151.)

And, it being after Midnight, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Resolution to be reported upon Monday next; Committee to sit again upon Monday next.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Committee deferred till Monday next.

UNIVERSITIES OF OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE ACT, 1877.

Sir LEWIS McIVER (Edinburgh, W.) moved:—

"That an humble address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to withhold her consent from the statute made by the governing body of Oriel College, Oxford, altering Statute IV. of the statutes of the college by the insertion after the 18th clause of a new clause numbered 18a."

Mr. JAMES BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) said he had been requested by the Provost of Oriel College to say, on behalf of the College, that they assented to the motion for the address being carried without a division, in the hope and expectation that the College would be able to frame and carry a provision respecting the selected candidates of the Indian Civil Service as would be approved by the India Office, as the guardians of the interests of that Service, and which they would regard as satisfactory.

Sir JOHN MOWBRAY (Oxford University) desired, as the representative of the University of Oxford, to express the great satisfaction with which he had listened to the words of his right hon. Friend opposite.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at Twenty-five
minutes before One o'clock
till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 29th March 1897.

COMMISSION.

The following Bills have received the Royal Assent:—

1. Army (Annual).
2. Consolidated Fund (No. 1.).
3. London (Borough Road, Southwark) Provisional Order.
4. London (Churchway, St. Pancras) Provisional Order.
5. Metropolitan Police Provisional Order.
6. Surveyors (County Dublin).

The Lords Commissioners were the LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord Halsbury), Lord JAMES of HEREFORD (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster), and the EARL of WALDEGRAVE (Captain, Yeomen of the Guard).

THOMPSON'S DIVORCE BILL [H.L.].

Returned from the Commons agreed to.

OCCUPIERS' DWELLINGS BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to provide facilities for the acquisition by occupiers and occupying ratepayers of their dwellings—Was presented by the Lord de Vesci (*V. de Vesci*) (for the Lord Wemyss (*E. Wemyss*)); read 1ª; and to be printed.—[No. 38.]

INFANT LIFE PROTECTION BILL [H.L.].

THE EARL OF DENBIGH, in moving the Second Reading of this Bill, reminded their Lordships that last Session, at the instance of the London County Council, he introduced a Bill for the purpose of amending the existing law, dealing with the protection of infant life, with a view of making it rather less of a dead letter than it unfortunately was at the present moment, except in the area administered by the London County Council. As the law now stood the registration of houses where infants were kept was only required in cases where more than one infant of less than twelve months old were maintained, therefore anybody could take in one child of less than twelve months, and any number of a greater age. In such cases nothing could be done by the local authorities or anybody else. It was important to remember that it was not merely ill-treatment and neglect which caused a great amount of mortality amongst infants, but it was the mere aggregation of a large number of small children under one roof which caused a mortality so truly distressing. The Bill of last Session was introduced with the view of extending the age and making it apply to cases where only one child was kept, and was referred to a Select Committee of their Lordships' House, over which he had the honour of presiding. A considerable amount of searching evidence was taken from philanthropic people and charitable societies, and also from several of the London coroners who had had a considerable amount of experience in the administration of the existing law. As a result it was decided to abolish the proposal for the registration of houses, and to insist merely on notification being given to the local authorities where it was decided to maintain such infants, so that there should be no interference with existing charitable and voluntary societies which, in many instances, put out children to nurse with foster parents, and did a great deal of good in that way. It was also decided that notification should be insisted upon in places where only one infant was maintained. There were two classes of people who now engaged in the bringing up of children not their own. There were many who took them in from a pure neighbourly feeling when children were left suddenly without parents. Others were taken in by foster parents who were engaged by charitable societies and philanthropic individuals, but over and above these there were what he might call the professionals—those who had children handed over to them at railway stations with the payment of a considerable lump sum, who passed the children through various hands till they were lost sight of and, in most cases, ultimately made away with. There were also extreme cases, such as that which occupied so much attention last year of the unfortunate woman, Mrs. Dyer, who took in children partly with the view of deliberately murdering them, and also with the idea of gradually starving them to death by neglect and cruelty. It was only those professionals there was any desire to deal with under an amended law, too many of whom carried on their trade with impunity. It was necessary in the interests of humanity to do something to amend the present law, under which it was practically impossible to deal with many cases that occurred, or to make provision against the Act being evaded in every possible particular. If their Lordships read the Bill a Second time, and ultimately passed it a great many cases which now evaded the law would be brought within its scope, and much of the mortality which now prevailed would be stopped. Objection was raised to the Bill last year on the ground that it was too much of a permissive nature. He thought, however, it was absolutely necessary to make it permissive to a certain extent, because if they made it too obligatory in the rural districts it would be regarded as a great hardship inasmuch as those districts would be put to a considerable amount of expense for the purpose of looking after children who were brought into those districts from other localities. If the Bill was now read a Second time he should be perfectly willing in Committee to accept any Amendments which might be proposed with a view to making the Measure more workable. There might be questions, such as which was the best authority for the purpose of administering the Bill. In England the promoters had suggested that the authorities should be the District Councils. Others preferred boards of guardians, but he had a perfectly open mind on the subject, and was prepared to accept whichever authority was considered by those who had experience to be the better. He begged to move that the Bill be read a Second time.

*THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER, in supporting the Motion, observed that the Bill had precisely the same object in view as that which became an Act 25 years ago, but, as had been already said, that Act had ever since its birth been a dead letter. Now, if an Act of Parliament with the object of which everyone, he presumed, sympathised, had for 25 years been a dead letter, it must be for one of two reasons: either that the object aimed at had been attained in another way, or that the machinery proposed by the Act for attaining that object was found cumbrous and unworkable. Unhappily it was clear that the object aimed at had not been secured. That the present machinery on the other hand had been found cumbrous and unworkable was amply shown by the noble Earl himself in the Debate of last year, and it was easy to amplify evidence of it if necessary. But practically no evidence was necessary when they considered that with the exception of the London County Council, the Bill had not been put in operation in any part of England. The novel machinery proposed by the present Bill was the result of very careful consideration and thought, and would with a minimum of personal hardship, a minimum of administrative friction, and what was also important, a minimum of public expense, bring about, he believed, the result they all desired. That object was the better protection of infant life. He presumed that many persons when they heard that word jumped at once to the conclusion that the object of the Bill was to put down the sort of horror to which the noble Lord alluded—those great baby-farming cases which now and then sprang to light, and at which England stood aghast. But he believed the Bill would have little effect in that direction; nor did he believe that any legislation could be introduced which would make much difference in that particular unless it were what the Prime Minister had described as of such a Draconian character as to hurt a hundred innocent people for every criminal brought to justice. Those persons were already defying every law, human and divine, and it was not by passing a Bill of this sort they could bring their wickedness to an end. But those black horrors were insignificant compared with the slow, the unostentatious, and the lingering sufferings which were being inflicted by foster parents, often in sheer ignorance, sometimes, he feared, in callous indifference, all over England upon infant lives that were intrusted to their care. What was proposed in the Bill would, he believed, go far to bring to an end some of the ill-deeds which were thus, partly from ignorance and partly from indifference, being perpetrated, and would do it in a practically efficient manner. In the forefront of this question stood the fact that nearly all the children whom they were thus called upon to protect were illegitimate. Illegitimate children were the most unprotected of all unprotected folk, and he did not believe the country was in the least aware what was the proportion at this moment of illegitimate children who died before they were 12 months old. If they had the statistics before them, he believed England would be appalled, and he confessed it did seem to him discreditable to their official returns that the statistics were not tabulated so that the true proportion of such infant mortality should be known. The facts were all there, ready to hand, in Somerset House. When an infant died, its death was duly registered as legitimate or illegitimate, and though they were furnished annually with a return of the number of illegitimate births, there was nothing in the public tables given them with regard to the number of illegitimate infants whose deaths were thus registered. That it was necessary they should have such information was obvious, when by such inferential or incidental means as were at their disposal they got at the facts at all. They had means for getting at the circumstances here and there. For example, in London in 1895 there were 2,119 inquests upon children under 12 months' old. The birth returns of the whole country showed them, roughly speaking, that one birth in every 25 was illegitimate. If the mortality were anything like equal between legitimate and illegitimate children, 1-25th of these 2,119 inquests would be inquests on illegitimate children. That was to say, there would be 90 inquests in all on babies who were illegitimate, but instead of 90, as a matter of fact the number in 1895 was 322, showing what an appalling proportion of the suspicious mortality that took place among infants was in regard to the cases of illegitimate infants, for whom protection was so specially needed. Another bit of fact available was the following. Dr. Tatham, now head of the Statistical Department of Somerset House, and formerly Medical Officer of Manchester, had carefully tabulated the returns for the years 1891-94 for Manchester, showing the proportion of the deaths of infants under 12 months old legitimately born and illegitimately born. Of the legitimate infants the proportion was 174 per 1,000, and of the illegitimate 392 per 1,000, so that nearly 40 per cent. of the illegitimately born infants in Manchester died before they were 12 months old. This fact, even if it stood alone, appeared to him to justify a demand that statistics should be tabulated and made available for the whole of the kingdom. The facts would be found to be appalling, and much more terrible than the mere mortality was the thought of the long and horrid suffering undergone before these little lives came to an end. These deaths took place for the most part in the homes or houses of the foster parents, and in trying to apportion the blame they must, of course, lay it upon the foster mother in the first instance; but it would be found that to ignorance, carelessness, and the extreme poverty and wretchedness of the home rather than to cruelty most of the deaths were due. Again, severe blame could not always be attached to the unfortunate mother, some unhappy girl who had no thought of harming her baby, but who, earning a miserable pittance, was obliged to board out the child at the least possible expense. To him it seemed rather that the blame went further back to the father of the infant, who so often in callous selfishness shirked all responsibility; but until amendments were made in regard to the affiliation laws this could not be dealt with. The object now was not to apportion the blame, but to legislate as far as possible in the direction of providing a remedy for a system leading to so much suffering and infant mortality. It might be an open question who should be the authority to put this machinery in operation, but some such machinery was urgently required. ["Hear, hear!"]

LORD BELPER expressed, on behalf of the Home Secretary, entire sympathy with the object of the Bill. The effect of the Bill would not be so much to put a stop to those dreadful cases of professional baby-farming brought to light from time to time, as to do something to prevent the suffering arising from ignorance, carelessness, and want of thought, to which that suffering was more often due than to intentional ill-treatment. The scope of the Bill was clearly defined and restricted by the Committee on the subject, and the evidence given before that Committee was conclusive as to the necessity of confining the operation of the Bill to cases where more than one child was kept under five years of age. The alteration of the system of registration to notification would be less onerous on parents, and the effect would be to encourage entries being given. Another point was of grave importance, and that was the machinery for carrying the law into effect. In the opinion of the Home Secretary there were points of difficulty in this respect, and therefore his right hon. Friend, in assenting to the Second Reading, reserved the right to suggest Amendments in Committee. He asked the noble Lord to defer the Motion for Committee until after Easter, in order that full consideration might be given to points of detail, and the Bill made more efficacious for the object with which it was introduced.

Bill read a Second time, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

POST OFFICE CONSOLIDATION BILL [H.L.].

Amendment Reported (according to Order), and Bill to be Read 3ª To-morrow.

House Adjourned at Five Minutes before Five o'Clock, till To-morrow, a Quarter past Ten o'Clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 29th March 1897.

COMMISSION.

Message to attend the Lords Commissioners. The House went, and being returned,

MR. SPEAKER reported the Royal Assent to several Bills which had passed both Houses.—(For List, see proceedings of the House of Lords of this date.)

FINANCIAL RELATIONS (GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND).—PETITION.

THE LORD MAYOR OF DUBLIN, accompanied by several of the members and officers of the Corporation of Dublin, attended at the Bar of the House to present the petition of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and the Burgesses of Dublin in favour of a revision of the financial relations between England and Ireland. On taking his place at the Bar of the House the Lord Major of Dublin was loudly cheered by the Irish Members.

Lord Belper,

*MR. SPEAKER: My Lord Mayor of Dublin, what have you there?

THE LORD MAYOR OF DUBLIN: A petition, Sir, to the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled from the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and the Burgesses of Dublin, which showeth—

"That, under the Treaty of the Union between the Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, a constitutional right is guaranteed to Ireland to have her circumstances specially considered in reference to the imposition of taxation by the Parliament of the United Kingdom and to the incidence of such taxation; that this right has been constantly and continuously insisted upon in Parliament by the representatives of Ireland of all political parties since the Union; that the final Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners appointed by Royal Warrant of May 26 1894, to inquire into the financial relations of Great Britain and Ireland establishes, nevertheless, the fact that, whilst the actual tax revenue of Ireland is about 1-11th of that of Great Britain, the relative taxable capacity of Ireland is very much smaller, and is not estimated by any of the Commissioners as exceeding 1-20th, and consequently Ireland is now taxed to an amount of between two-and-a-half and three million pounds per annum in excess of her proper proportion"—

["hear, hear!"]—

"that this grave injustice to Ireland, as further appears from the said Report, has been brought about not only by the imposition of a financial burden at the time of the Union which, as events showed, she was unable to bear, but, by a serious addition to that burden in 1853 and several succeeding years, which was not justified by the circumstances of Ireland, but which, nevertheless, has been continued and even increased since that time"—

["hear, hear!"]—

"that this burden of excessive taxation has seriously injured, and is seriously injuring, the material interests of Ireland, and has contributed in no small degree to retard her commercial progress and prevent her industrial development, and that, so long as it exists, it must continue to have that result and to constitute a grave national grievance affecting all classes of the Irish population; that your petitioners feel confident that in laying these views before your honourable House they are giving expression to convictions firmly held, and well nigh universally entertained, by the citizens of Dublin. Your petitioners therefore pray that your honourable House will take into consideration the grievance disclosed by the said Report, and will, at an early date, adopt such measures as justice may dictate to redress that grievance and to alleviate its effects."

[*Loud Irish cheers.*]

QUESTIONS.

IRISH MODEL SCHOOLS DEPARTMENT.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can explain why, in the Estimates for 1897 for the Irish Model Schools Department, there is omitted the statement prefixed to this grant in former years that this department is designed to exhibit the best mode of conducting National Schools, and that it affords teachers in training an opportunity of practising the art of teaching daily under their several trainers; have these statements ceased to be correct; and, what is the present situation of the Irish Model School Department.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds, Central): The condition of the Model Schools being under the consideration of a Committee of the Board of National Education, the Commissioners deemed it proper, when sending forward the Estimates for 1897-8, to omit the statement prefixed to the Estimates of previous years. The omission of the statement was not intended in any way to prejudge the Report of the Committee.

MANITOBA (EDUCATION QUESTION).

MR. WILLIAM JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that the recent settlement of the education question in Manitoba, after having been approved of by the great majority of the Roman Catholics, and accepted as a satisfactory compromise by the Protestants, has been denounced by Archbishop Langevin and the Romish Hierarchy; and that those persons who vote against the commands of the Roman Catholic priests are to be refused burial in consecrated ground after their death; and, whether he can give any information concerning this matter, and will lay upon the Table of the House a copy of the settlement arrived at by Mr. Laurier, the Canadian Premier, and Mr. Greenway, the Prime Minister of Manitoba?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): I have no official information on this matter, which relates entirely to the domestic politics of Canada.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL (AUDIT).

SIR ANDREW SCOBLE (Hackney, Central): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the accounts of the London County Council are audited by a district auditor appointed by the Local Government Board for that purpose; and whether the accounts of the Departmental Committees of the London County Council are audited separately from the general accounts of that Council; and, if so, whether the accounts of the Works Department of that Council, now forming the subject of an inquiry by a Special Committee of that Council, have been audited and certified by the auditor appointed by the Local Government Board?

THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. T. W. RUSSELL, Tyrone, S.): The accounts of the London County Council are audited by a district auditor appointed by the Local Government Board, and the accounts of the several departmental committees of the Council are audited as part of the accounts of the Council. The accounts of the Council, including those of the Works Department, for the year ended 31 March 1896, the period which is, as I understand, that in respect of which the proceedings of the Works Department are the subject of inquiry, have been audited and certified by the auditor appointed by the Board. The accounts of the Works Department were altered so as to accord with the facts before those accounts were submitted to the auditor.

VOLUNTEER OFFICERS (CLASSES AT WELLINGTON BARRACKS).

MR. HUBERT DUNCOMBE (Cumberland, Egremont): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War on what principle the classes of instruction for Volunteer Officers at Wellington Barracks are filled up; whether the class to be held in May next was filled up before the 20th March, when the official notices were sent out;

whether he is aware that the application of the Officer commanding the 2nd V.B. (P.W.O.), Yorkshire Regiment, for permission to attend these classes has been three times refused; whether he can state the reason of such refusals; whether any preference is given to officers in London corps over officers in country corps; and, whether he can give the respective numbers of officers belonging to London and country corps that have received permission to attend the forthcoming class in May?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): The classes at Wellington Barracks for the instruction of officers of the Volunteers are filled strictly in accordance with priority of application. The formation of the May class was notified in the Home District Orders of the 13th March, and on the 25th there were still two vacancies for subalterns. Two applications have been received from the Yorkshire battalion referred to; and they had to be refused as there were no vacancies for officers of their rank, and as the applications were for the May class only, instead of giving the choice of several months as recommended in Art. 298 of the Volunteer Regulations. No preference is given to officers in the London district. Out of the 30 officers accepted for the May class, 8 belong to the Home district and 22 to other districts.

ROXBOROUGH SCHOOLS, LIMERICK.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland under what Act are the premises of the Roxborough Schools, Limerick vested in the Commissioners of Education; and is there any statutable restriction on the Commissioners' power of selling, letting, or alienating them?

*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. ATKINSON, Londonderry, N.): The lands upon which the present Diocesan School is built appear to have been acquired for the use of the school by the Commissioners of Education by purchase under the powers conferred upon them by the 27th Section of the Endowed Schools (Ireland) Act 1813 (53 Geo. 3, c. 107), and are in the words of that section "unalienable and not to be let or disposed of to any other use whatever."

Mr. Hubert Duncombe.

LAND COMMISSION.

GENERAL HUGH McCALMONT (Antrim, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will grant the Return which stands on the Paper this day with regard to the officers of the Land Commission?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The Return moved for by my hon. and gallant Friend is a little vague. I presume it is intended to apply to the Department of the Land Commission only, and not to the Civil Bill Courts, or to the Land Judge and the officers of his Court, whose duties are also connected with the administration of the Land Law and Land Purchase Acts. Perhaps my hon. and gallant Friend will communicate with me in reference to the form of the Return.

MR. H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether any, and, if so, how many, of the Assistant Commissioners, charged with the duty of valuing the property, fixing the income, and defining the rights of Irish landowners, are hired by the year or for any lesser period; (2) whether, in the event of there being a diminution in the number of cases of rent reduction, and a consequent falling off in the number of cases listed in the Courts, the services of those gentlemen will cease to be required and their temporary salaries cease to be paid; and (3) whether, in that event, any provision will be made for them on their discharge from their present judicial office?

MR. J. C. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers that Question, I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether it is seemly that the word "hired" should appear in a Question, as it must be offensive to these persons? ["Hear, hear."]

*MR. SPEAKER: I think it would have been better if a word less capable of an offensive meaning had been used. ["Hear, hear."]

MR. T. M. HEALY: Would it not have been better if the words "Catholic Bishops" had been used instead of "Romish hierarchy" in the Question of the hon. Member for Belfast?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: With regard to the first paragraph, I would refer my hon. Friend to Return No. 107

of this Session, which gives details as to the tenure, etc., of the lay Assistant Commissioners. The Return does not include the legal Assistant Commissioners, of whom, at present, four are permanently, and two temporarily, employed. The answer to the second paragraph is in the affirmative. On former occasions no provision was made, as suggested, on the termination of their duties by Assistant Commissioners temporarily employed; and I am not aware that it is proposed, or that there is power, to adopt a different arrangement in future.

MR. T. M. HEALY: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether there is any authority for the use of the words in the Question, "fixing the incomes of the Irish landowners"?

[No reply was given.]

MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): Confiscation.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that very great delay has taken place and is taking place in dealing with applications made to the Irish Land Commission for the release of guarantee deposits under the 29th Section, Sub-sections (2) and (3), of the Land Law (Ireland) Act 1896, and that a large number of applications have been for some months past left by the Land Commission without reply, thus causing great delay and inconvenience to the parties interested; and, what action he proposes to take in the matter?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: With regard to applications under the third Sub-section, I am informed that in every case in which a decade has expired since the making of the advance, the amount which could have been paid out under the provisions of this Sub-section has been so released. Applications have been received in respect of 151 estates under Sub-section 2, Section 29 of the Act of 1896; of these 77 have been dealt with and 74 are under consideration and will probably be ruled within the next month. There has been no unnecessary delay in ruling these applications, and the deposits carry interest until they are released.

MR. EDWARD CARSON (Dublin University): Is it not the fact that notwithstanding the legislation of last year the Land Commissioners refuse to sanction purchases in a majority of cases?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I am not aware that they refuse in a majority of cases, but they have refused in several cases.

MR. T. M. HEALY asked whether, in view of the fact that both landlords and tenants were greatly dissatisfied with the working of the Purchase Acts, there had been any application to the Treasury for an increase in the staff of the Commissioners.

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: There has already been a large increase in the staff of Sub-Commissioners. It is impossible to increase the numbers indefinitely.

MR. T. M. HEALY: My question refers to the Purchase Department, not to the Department for fixing fair rents.

TELEGRAPH SERVICE ACCOUNTS.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, if he has observed that Parliamentary Papers, No. 5 and No. 16, of last Session, purporting to be accounts of the Telegraph Service, contain no hint that revenue to the amount of £1,241,774 has been actually invested in sites and buildings; that, on the other hand, the said sum so invested is treated as unremunerative expenditure, and employed to swell the so-called deficiency of Telegraph revenue; and that no allowance is made in the receipts, or revenue, side of the said accounts for the rent which would be payable by the Department but for the purchase of such sites and the erection of such buildings; if he can state who is responsible for the correctness and completeness of the accounts referred to; whether he can state the total amount expended on the sites and buildings appropriated at St. Martin's-le-Grand to the Telegraph Service, and the estimated value thereof at the present day; and whether the value of the sites and buildings acquired in the great towns throughout the United Kingdom for telegraph purposes increases largely from year to year, and now exceeds two million sterling?

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. R. W. HANBURY, Preston): So far from Parliamentary Papers No. 5 and No. 16 of last Session conveying no hint that a large sum has been expended on sites and buildings, Paper No. 5 distinctly shows that £1,096,844 was expended in respect of the Telegraph Service by the Office of Works in England and £84,527 by the Board of Public Works in Ireland, a large portion of this expenditure being of course on buildings. The sum of £1,241,774, named in the Question is taken from the Parliamentary Return No. 37 of 1895, and from an answer which I gave myself in this House on the 4th July 1896. It exceeds the two sums I have named partly because the latter sum contains the amounts expended on sites, which are not paid for by the Office of Works but are included in the column showing the expenditure by the Post Office. With respect to the hon. Member's allegations that the sum so invested is treated as unremunerative expenditure and employed to swell the so-called deficiency of Telegraph revenue, and that no allowance is made in the receipts, or revenue, side of the said accounts for the rent which would be payable by the Department but for the purchase of such sites and the erection of such buildings, I desire to add that the Returns referred to are prepared in accordance with Section 4 of the 29th Vic. c. 5, and (that) they are not detailed statements of assets and liabilities, and therefore the value of sites, buildings, plant, etc., is not shown in them. Account No. 16 is prepared by the Treasury and the Post Office jointly, and the responsible officers have signed it. No portion of the original cost of the G.P.O. East or G.P.O. West was charged to Telegraph account. The G.P.O. North cost about £526,000 and of this one-third was charged to Telegraph account. Without a special valuation no useful estimate could be given of the present value of these buildings. The value of the sites and buildings acquired in the great towns of the United Kingdom for Post Office purposes probably increases from year to year, but without a special valuation, there is no means of knowing their present value.

QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE (IMPERIAL STAMPS).

MR. HENNIKER HEATON: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, if he can explain to the House what are the particular difficulties in the way which prevent the issue of a special Imperial stamp or postage stamps to commemorate the great Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen?

*MR. HANBURY: It was not suggested that any particular difficulties prevented the issue of a special Imperial stamp or postage stamps. In the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, the issue of a special Imperial stamp or postage stamps is not the proper way to commemorate the Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen, and, apart from the fact that it would now be too late to do so, the designs for coins and stamps do not seem to improve as time goes on.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON asked whether it was not the fact that a new series of postage stamps was now in course of preparation?

*MR. HANBURY: That is a separate Question, which I am not at this moment prepared to answer.

PLEURO-PNEUMONIA.

MR. W. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether another outbreak of pleuro-pneumonia contagiosa has occurred recently in London; whether this further outbreak, and the result of investigations, have satisfied the authorities that the disease was local and not imported; and whether Ireland has had a clean bill of health for live stock (excepting swine fever) for a much longer period than Great Britain?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. WALTER LONG, Liverpool, West Derby): It is, I regret to say, the case that another outbreak of pleuro-pneumonia has occurred in London. So far as our inquiries have as yet proceeded, we have no reason to think that the disease was imported. It is the case that no outbreak of pleuro-pneumonia has been reported in Ireland for a much longer period than in Great Britain.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeen, W.): If this disease is not imported, is it the opinion of the scientific advisers of the right hon. Gentleman that the disease can occasionally spring up spontaneously?

*Mr. LONG: The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that the opinion of our expert advisers is that the disease cannot have a spontaneous origin. But it may be lying dormant for a long time.

TREASON-FELONY PRISONERS.

Mr. FIELD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the cases of Fitzharris, Mullett, and Hanlan, who have suffered long imprisonment, are under consideration; and whether they have been recently medically examined, and by whom; and whether Maryborough Gaol, in which they are confined, is regarded as the invalid prison of Ireland?

Mr. M. McCARTAN (Down, S.): In connection with this question may I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he is aware that during the many years these prisoners were in Downpatrick Gaol by their exemplary conduct they won the sympathy and admiration even of the Tory doctor who attended the gaol; and whether he is also aware that there is a very strong feeling in favour of the amnesty of these men in the north of Ireland?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: I did not quite catch the hon. Member's question, but I have no reason to think that the conduct of these men was otherwise than good. Memorials from Convicts Fitzharris and Mullett have been received, and are under consideration. No memorial has been received from Hanlan. All three convicts are under the constant medical supervision of the resident medical officer of Maryborough Prison and of the visiting physician. They were also examined by the medical member of the Prisons Board on the 11th inst. Maryborough Prison is partly an invalid prison and partly an agricultural one for selected prisoners.

INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL CONGRESS.

Mr. FIELD: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the Government received an invitation from the Royal Hungarian Minister of Agriculture to send representatives to the International Agricultural Congress, which was held at Budapest last autumn; and whether he can state the reason for the absence of Governmental Departmental Officials from, and the want of co-operation in, that important Conference with other nations?

*Mr. LONG: The Government were invited to send official representatives to the International Agricultural Congress held in Budapest last autumn, but in view of the nature and scope of the questions to be discussed, and of the difficulty of defining the position of such representatives, we did not feel ourselves able to accept the invitation. In arriving at this conclusion we had before us the fact that the Royal Agricultural Society, the Central Chamber of Agriculture, and the National Federation of Meat Traders had arranged to be represented at the Congress, and that, therefore, the interests of British agriculture would be efficiently kept in view.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he is aware that County Inspector Seymour, of County Down, is in the habit of requiring the policemen of Downpatrick to attend on his family and himself as if they were his private servants; and that these policemen when on duty have often been required to carry letters, parcels, and messages, although under the police regulations any constable carrying a message or parcel when on duty is liable to a fine of £3; (2) whether such conduct on the county inspector's part is contrary to these regulations; and, (3) will steps be taken to put an end to the practice complained of?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: I am assured that there is no foundation for the allegations contained in the first paragraph of this Question.

Mr. JASPER TULLY (Leitrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Constable Lester, of the County Leitrim force, was recently charged with obtaining goods under false pretences from a cycle firm in Dublin; that he purloined letters addressed by this firm to his sergeant who had retired on pension; and that he wrote and posted letters in the name of this sergeant to this firm with intent to defraud : and that the constable was adjudged guilty, and transferred to another station ; and whether, in view of the gravity of the offences, he will recommend that the sentence be revised and increased ?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: The constable was not charged with obtaining goods under false pretences. An allegation was made that he had intercepted a letter addressed to the sergeant of his station and that he had replied to that letter in a communication purporting to have been written and signed by the sergeant, with the object, apparently, of evading a small debt stated to have been due to the cycle firm. The firm, however, subsequently, expressed a desire not to proceed with the case, and the Inspector General dealt with the constable's failure to explain the allegations against him as an offence against discipline, for which he was severely admonished and sent to another county at his own expense. Of course, if the cycle firm desire to prefer a criminal charge against the constable every assistance will be afforded to them to have it investigated by the magistrates.

POSTAL FACILITIES (QUEEN'S COUNTY).

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether the important centre of Ballyfin, in the Queen's County, is now served from Mountrath as post town, and whether in consequence, letters and papers are delivered a day later than they need be at the former place, whether he is aware that Maryborough, a railway junction, is actually nearer to Ballyfin than Mountrath is ; and whether some arrangement can be made to get rid of the present great delay ?

***Mr. HANBURY**: Ballyfin is now served from Mountrath, as post town, by a postman on foot working in connection with the night mail. The arrival is at 7.40 a.m. and the dispatch at 5.50 p.m. No earlier delivery of letters and papers than at present is practicable if the service is to remain in connection with the night mail. Maryborough railway station is nearer to Ballyfin than Mountrath station is, but Maryborough post office is not quite so near to Ballyfin as Mountrath post office is, A service from Maryborough to Ballyfin in connection with the night mail would have no advantage over the present service from Mountrath, but if the post to Ballyfin were kept back until the arrival of the day mail from Dublin, the delivery would include day mail letters which now have to wait until next morning. The delivery could not however then take place either from Maryborough or Mountrath until past 10 a.m. and the dispatch would have to be made soon after 3 p.m. These hours might not be generally acceptable to the inhabitants, but enquiry shall be made on the subject and the result communicated to the hon. Member.

PUBLIC LOANS (IRELAND).

Mr. J. PINKERTON (Galway): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if his attention has been directed to the proceedings of the Grand Jury of County Galway, on Wednesday last, when they refused to pass 19 presentments to pay interest due to the Board of Works, thereby withholding a considerable sum from the Treasury, the foreman stating that they had refused to present as a protest against their excessive and unfair treatment by the Treasury in the matter of interest on public loans ; and, whether seeing the low rate at which the Government can borrow, he will see his way to reduce the rate of interest due upon loans granted to public boards in Ireland ?

***Mr. HANBURY**: It is the fact that the Judge allowed the Grand Jury to refuse to pay certain debts to the Board of Works, on the ground that the Board had not sent them the proper certificates in each case ; and the matter was sprung upon the Board of Works so unexpectedly that they had not time to advise the Crown Solicitor of the right answer—which is that the necessity for such certificates, although provided for in the original Loan Acts, is now dispensed with by Section 13 of the Public Works Loans Act, 1883. On the following day, the Judge having left Galway, the Board applied to the other Judge for an order for the raising of the amount, but as certain county documents were missing, he would not deal with the matter. Under the section quoted, however, the mistake can be corrected by the High Court, to which an application will accordingly be made. The statutory rates of interest under the various Loan Acts of which the Grand Jury complained, vary between one per cent. for Relief of Distress, three-and-a-quarter per cent. for Drainage, three-and-a-half per cent. for Industrial Schools and Lunatic Asylums, and five per cent. for Roads and Bridges. I have repeatedly explained that, as the Local Loans Fund is at present constituted, it only just pays its way, and any reduction in the present rates of interest would seriously endanger its solvency.

POLICE PROTECTION (DROMOD, COUNTY MONAGHAN).

MR. JAMES DALY (Monaghan, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state to the House the annual cost of maintaining the police hut at Dromod, County Monaghan; whether the total cost of maintaining this police hut is charged to Ireland; whether he is aware when any person was sent for trial to either Quarter Sessions or Assizes from the police district of Dromod; that the Judge of Assizes at Monaghan this month was presented with white gloves owing to there being no criminal cases; and that the County Court Judge, in whose district the Dromod hut is situate has been several times during recent years presented with white gloves on account of its stainless character; and whether he will consider the advisability of removing the police hut in question?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The annual cost of maintaining this hut is about £287, the entire of which is defrayed out of the Constabulary Vote. No person has been sent for trial from the sub-district attached to the hut since its establishment in 1894. The hut was originally erected for the special protection of an individual, but since 1896, when it was removed to its present site, it has been maintained for the purpose of preventing crime and for the preservation of the public peace in the surrounding district. There is no intention to remove this hut station.

PRISON CLERKS.

MR. F. PLATT-HIGGINS (Salford, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any steps are in contemplation to secure to the first and second class prison clerks the prospects held out to them by the notices in *The London Gazette*, of 9th September 1879, under which they paid an examination fee of £3, to be charged only when the probable maximum salary is £400, or not exceeding £450 per annum; and (2) are the classification and annual increments such that it takes these gentlemen 25 years to attain a salary of £200 per annum, and that there are three classes senior to them, the maximum of the highest of which is but £300 per annum?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY, Lancashire, Blackpool): As regards the question of the examination fee, I can only refer the hon. Member to the answer given last April on the subject by the Secretary to the Treasury. That answer was to the effect that the fee was fixed at £3 because there were posts of the maximum value of £400 and upwards to which the clerks could be promoted without further certificate from the Civil Service Commission, but that the payment of the fee gave the clerks no claim to rise to a salary of that amount before retirement. I may say, however, that, as the result of a recent re-organisation, among other improvements that have been made in the position of the clerks, the number of more highly-paid posts to which they are eligible for promotion has been increased, and promotions, in fact, have already been made. The answer to the second part of the Question is in the affirmative, except that the maximum salary of the highest of the three classes referred to is £300, with a house, or an allowance of £26 in lieu.

ROYAL MILITARY ACADEMY, WOOLWICH.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to paragraph 13 of the Report of the Board of Visitors of the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, dated 29th December 1896, which states that the area for outdoor games available for the cadets is far too limited; that they consider it a matter of urgency that the cadets should be provided with more space for outdoor games than they have at present, the Common being now so crowded as to be of little use; that there is at the back of the Academy space enough of Government land; and that no time should be lost in levelling and draining this land for the use of the cadets; and whether any steps are being taken to carry out this recommendation?

MR. BRODRICK: The question of providing additional recreation ground for the Royal Military Academy will be considered when the Estimates for 1898-9 are under discussion.

INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS (IRELAND)

MR. R. McGHEE (Louth, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland how many pupils in 1896 in the Irish Industrial Schools were examined, and how many passed in practical agriculture and in handicraft?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The statistics for 1896 are not yet tabulated, but for the previous year it appears that none of the pupils of Industrial Schools, the pupils of which were enrolled in National Schools, were examined in either practical agriculture or handicraft at the annual examinations held by the inspector of the National Board of Education.

PARSONSTOWN AND PORTUMNA RAILWAY (IRELAND).

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the late Government proposed to re-equip the Parsonstown and Portumna derelict railway, and that the Great Southern and Western Company at that time agreed to carry out the necessary equipment, afterwards refusing to do so as their calculations were found to be erroneous; whether, seeing that it has been calculated that £24,000 will re-equip the line, that sum will be given out of the £50,000 granted last Session for promoting railways in Ireland; and whether the Great Southern and Western Company have made an offer to work the line and incorporate it with their own?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The late Government made no offer such as is alleged in the Question. It did, however, repeat the terms of an offer that had already been made by the previous Government, the effect of which was that if an agreement were come to with a responsible company such as the Great Southern and Western Railway to restore the line, and when restored to maintain it, the Treasury would be asked to contribute £12,000 towards the cost of re-construction, estimated at £24,000. The present Government has intimated its willingness to contribute towards the cost of re-construction if an arrangement be come to within a reasonable time; but further than this it cannot go until it has before it a definite scheme to which the Grand Jury and the Railway Company which proposes to work the line, are agreed. Under the Railways Act of last year, which provided £500,000, not £50,000, for the purposes referred to, it would not be possible for the Government, in any circumstances, to contribute more than one-half of the cost of construction and equipment.

MR. R. M. DANE (Fermanagh, N.): Arising out of that, may I ask whether as the Great Southern Railway Company are willing to construct this line, the present Government will give a larger sum than £12,000?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: No, it would not be possible under the Act.

QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE (COLONIAL PREMIERS).

MR. J. F. HOGAN (Tipperary, Mid): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has now received replies from the Premiers of all the self-governing Colonies; how many have intimated their acceptance of his invitation to be present at the official celebration of Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee; and whether he can give a general indication of the subjects of Imperial interest on which it is proposed to invite their opinions and co-operation?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: The answers from the Premiers of the self-governing Colonies are still incomplete. I have already stated that no formal conference is intended, although Her Majesty's Government will be glad to have the opinions and co-operation of the Premiers on any matters of common interest.

NEW HEBRIDES.

MR. HOGAN : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what results, if any, have accrued from the further remonstrances, addressed through the British Ambassador at Paris to the French Government, against the selling of spirits and firearms to the Natives of the New Hebrides by French traders?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. G. CURZON, Lancashire, Southport): No answer has as yet been received from the French Government to the representations as to restriction that we recently addressed to them.

ARMY MEDICAL STAFF.

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War (1) what steps he proposes to take in order to fill up the vacancies in, and complete the establishment of, the Army Medical Staff; and (2) whether, in case of mobilisation, the Army Medical Staff is now sufficient for the medical needs of Army corps?

MR. BRODRICK : It is intended to give an increase of pay in India and a shorter tour of service there, assistance in forming medical messes at large stations, quarters in barracks where possible, and better opportunities for study on return from foreign service. One or two other matters affecting the service are still under consideration. It is hoped that these additional advantages will increase the number of candidates for this service. My answer to the second part of the question (whether in case of mobilisation the Army Medical Staff is now sufficient for the medical needs of Army corps) is in the affirmative.

COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON EDUCATION.

MR. FLYNN : I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he can state how often meetings of the Committee are held; and whether any meetings of that body have been held since 1st January of this year; if so, how many, and upon what dates?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir JOHN GORST, Cambridge University) : No, Sir; I have made inquiries, and I find it would be contrary to all precedent to give any information as to the proceedings of a Committee of the Privy Council. [*Laughter.*]

MR. FLYNN : I did not ask what occurred at the meetings; I simply asked if any meeting had been held. Am I to understand that no meetings have been held?

SIR J. GORST : No; the hon. Gentleman can understand nothing except what I have stated in the answer which I have given him. [*Laughter.*]

RURAL POSTMEN (WAGES).

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, if he can state the scale of wages paid to rural postmen in Great Britain; and whether the same scale applies to Ireland?

*MR. HANBURY : The scales of wages now paid to rural postmen are as follow :—17s. by 1s. to 24s. a week, 17s. by 1s. to 22s. a week, 17s. by 1s. to 21s. a week, 16s. by 1s. to 20s. a week, 15s. by 1s. to 19s. a week, 14s. by 1s. to 18s. a week, 13s. by 1s. to 17s. a week according to the districts in which the men are serving. Under the recommendations of the Tweedmouth Committee, rural postmen starting on their walks from a town head office will receive the same scale as the town postmen in that town, except that the maximum of the scale will be less by 2s. a week. The new scales for provincial town postmen are respectively—18s. by 1s. 6d. to 30s. a week, 18s. by 1s. 6d. to 28s. a week, 18s. by 1s. 6d. to 26s. a week, 17s. by 1s. 6d. to 24s. a week, 16s. by 1s. 6d. to 22s. a week. As regards rural postmen starting from sub-offices, the pay, which will vary according to the rates of wages in the locality, will in no case fall below 16s. a week in Great Britain and 15s. a week in Ireland.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) was understood to ask whether the majority of the postmen in rural districts were not members of the auxiliary classes?

*Mr. HANBURY: No, I think not.

Captain DONELAN: Why is any difference made in the scale of pay in Great Britain and Ireland?

*Mr. HANBURY: Because everywhere the scale varies with the cost of living in the locality.

BRITISH SOUTH AFRICA (INSTRUCTIONS TO SIR A. MILNER).

Mr. PHILIP STANHOPE (Burnley): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, having regard to the greater publicity which he has inaugurated and maintained in the administration of the affairs of the Colonial Office and the importance of pending issues involved, he will lay upon the Table of the House the instructions given to Sir Alfred Milner upon his appointment as Her Majesty's High Commissioner in British South Africa?

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: As I shall have been able to fully communicate the views and instructions of Her Majesty's Government to Sir Alfred Milner by word of mouth it will not be necessary to give him written instructions, but no verbal instructions will be given to him inconsistent with the statements that I have already made in this House with regard to the policy of Her Majesty's Government in South Africa. [*Cheers.*]

Mr. STANHOPE: May I ask whether we can take it that they will not be inconsistent with the statement made by the right hon. Gentleman the night before last at the complimentary dinner——

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! Notice must be given of that Question.

NORFOLK ISLAND.

Mr. CHARLES BILL (Staffordshire, Leek): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether under the new arrangements for the better government of Norfolk Island provision has been made for the appointment of a chaplain; and if so, whether one has been appointed, and with what salary?

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I have no recent information on this subject, but I have reason to believe that the Governor of New South Wales does not contemplate the appointment of another chaplain for Norfolk Island, and that other arrangements will be made for the spiritual requirements of the community.

Sir WILFRID LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, under the rules regulating the new system of government in Norfolk Island, the chief magistrate is empowered to grant permits for the sale of beer, wine or spirituous liquor, to such persons as he may think fit, in place of the total prohibition of liquor selling which has hitherto prevailed in the island?

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: It will be seen from pages 40 and 41 of the Blue-book that the regulations respecting beer, wine or spirituous liquor only apply to the keeping of these commodities, and I have no reason to suppose that it is in contemplation to issue permits for their sale.

TRANSVAAL (SUPPRESSION OF NEWSPAPER).

*Sir ELLIS ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies (1) whether the Transvaal Government has suppressed the Uitlander newspaper, the *Star* of Johannesburg, and, if so, on what ground this action has been taken; (2) whether Her Majesty's Government have taken any steps with regard to the suppression of the *Johannesburg Critic* in December 1896: and (3) whether the 60,000 Uitlanders of Johannesburg, who are denied both the right of voting and of public meeting, are, by the suppression of these papers, prevented from making public their grievances?

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I have received through the High Commissioner a telegram from the British Agent at Pretoria, stating that the "Johannesburg *Star* newspaper has been suppressed for three months on the ground of being dangerous to public peace;" and a further telegram from the High Commissioner stating that the proprietors of the newspapers will bring the action of the Government of the South African Republic under the review of the High Court of Judicature. Her Majesty's Government are in communication with the Government of the South African Republic with regard to the suppression of the *Critic*. In regard to the third question, I can only say that, by the suppression of these papers, the Uitlanders have been deprived of their two principal organs of the Press.

COURT OF CONSCIENCE (CORK).

MR. VESEY KNOX (Londonderry): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether his attention has been called to the proceedings of the committee appointed by the Cork Corporation to inquire into the procedure of the Court of Conscience in that city, at which it was proved that the Court was used almost exclusively by money lenders to recover money lent at exorbitant interest to the very poorest class of the community; that the president of the Court is not a lawyer and has had no legal or official training; that the Court has habitually exceeded the jurisdiction conferred on it by law, granting decrees where the original debt exceeded £2 without production of the promissory notes sued on, allowing fines not payable by law and a rate of interest warranted neither by the law nor the individual contract; that all this was done against the protests of the registrar, who happens at present to be a lawyer; that the decrees of the Court are executed by irresponsible persons, sometimes with violence; and that in a recent case the Recorder of Cork commented severely on the conduct of the bailiffs executing one of these decrees; (2) whether the statutory protections for poor debtors which exist in the Civil Bill Court and the Petty Sessions Court apply to decrees of the Court of Conscience; and (3) whether, in view of the fact that the small debt jurisdiction of the Petty Sessions Court is now the same as that of the Court of Conscience, that the Court fees in it are less, and that the Petty Sessions Court sits in Cork on every week day, the Lord Lieutenant will consider the advisability of exercising his statutory power of abolishing the Court of Conscience?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: My attention has been directed to the proceedings of the special committee appointed by the Cork Corporation to inquire into certain allegations affecting the Court of Conscience. Before deciding what action it may be necessary to take in the matter, the Government will await the report of the Committee of Inquiry. I may add with regard to the Inquiry in the second paragraph, that statutory protection is given by the Municipal Corporation (Ireland) Act 1840, to the execution of orders of the Court of Conscience.

MR. JOHNSTON asked the right hon. Gentleman if the late mayor of Cork, Sir John Scott, the first Unionist Member for 18 years, had not put an end to this grievance in respect of rates of interest?

***MR. SPEAKER**: Order, order! Notice must be given of that Question.

POSTAGE (NEWSPAPER AND BOOK PACKETS).

MR. HENNIKER HEATON: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether, considering the inconvenience caused to and the dissatisfaction expressed by newspaper publishers and other senders of large quantities of newspaper and book post packets at halfpenny rates, he is prepared to rescind the Treasury Warrant, issued in November 1894, imposing a return fee of one halfpenny on papers and packets undeliverable by reason of change of address or from other causes; and what becomes of the considerable number of newspapers and book packets undelivered by reason of change of address or other cause which do not bear a request on the wrapper, to be returned to the sender in case of non-delivery?

***MR. HANBURY**: The Treasury Warrant to which the hon. Member refers provided for the free re-direction of newspapers and other postal packets sent at the halfpenny rate, and as its effect has been very advantageous to the public, the Postmaster General is not prepared to recommend that it should be rescinded. The Warrant in making this alteration further provided for the payment of postage for the return of such packets as might be undeliverable and whose return seemed desirable or necessary either from their intrinsic importance or from the written request of the addressor that they should be so returned; but as the addressor has no right to such undeliverable articles, the Postmaster General does not consider that there is any reason why he should not be charged for the cost of returning them, when he desires their return. Packets which do not bear a request for return in case of non-delivery are treated as waste paper, unless the contents appear to be of some importance, in which case they are offered to the sender subject to the payment of the return postage.

SOUTH AFRICAN LEAGUE.

MR. PHILIP STANHOPE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, having regard to the telegram addressed to him on Friday last by Mr. Anderson, President of the so-called South African League, he has been apprised of the unrepresentative character of the League in question; whether he is aware that telegrams couched in ultra-patriotic language are persistently communicated to the London Press from South African sources for the purpose of furthering speculative operations upon the Stock Exchange; and whether he will consider the advisability of refusing to give publicity, and therefore authority, to telegrams addressed to the Colonial Office, which cannot but tend to intensify the irritation still existing amongst the Dutch population of South Africa as a result of the Jameson Raid?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: There were two telegrams—one from Mr. Anderson and the other from the President of the South African League. I believe that that League represents the views of a large number of the inhabitants of South Africa. The answer is in the negative. I have no reason to believe that the telegrams in question were communicated with any such purpose. They were sent in reply to statements made by a witness before the Select Committee, who had given evidence in respect of the views of the people of Cape Colony, and it was necessary to give the witness an opportunity of answering them.

MR. STANHOPE: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered my Question in the terms of the question. I did not say these particular telegrams were sent for speculative purposes. I said telegrams are persistently sent for such purposes, and asked him whether, in the case of telegrams of that character, he would refuse to take notice of them.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: The question which the hon. Gentleman asked me could only have had reference to these two telegrams; and it is only in connection with those two telegrams that he asked this question. Certainly I do not think there is the slightest ground for the insinuation conveyed in the question. With regard to the question as to whether any telegrams have been sent for such purposes, I do not know anything about it, and certainly I am not aware that any such telegrams have been sent to the Colonial Office.

AGRICULTURAL PRICES (IRELAND).

MR. M. McCARTAN (Down, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Return of Agricultural Prices, etc., in Ireland, recently granted on the Motion of the Member for Galway, has been yet furnished to the lay Sub-Commissioners now administering the Law in relation to fair rent applications in Ireland; and, if not so furnished, why these Sub-Commissioners are not provided with information so necessary in fixing fair rents?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The information contained in the Return forms portion of the Return of Prices of Irish Agricultural Produce for the year 1896, which is now being prepared in the office of the Land Commission and will be ready for publication in the course of about ten days. As soon as it is published, copies will be supplied to the Assistant Commissioners in the same manner as has been done in previous years.

POST OFFICE ESTABLISHMENTS.

MR. MASSEY-MAINWARING (Finsbury, Central): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, if his attention has been drawn to a telegram sent by Lord Tweedmouth to the mass meeting of postmen at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, explaining that the Committee's Report clearly indicates that effective prohibition of Christmas boxes must necessarily be accompanied by the granting of a higher scale of wages to postmen; and when the higher scale of wages in lieu of Christmas boxes will be granted to all postmen?

Mr. S. WOODS (Essex, Walthamstow): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, if his attention has been called to that section of Lord Tweedmouth's Report which prohibits postmen asking for Christmas boxes; whether that recommendation will be acted on next Christmas; and, whether the whole of the Report will be brought under the consideration of the House; if so, when?

Mr. HANBURY: The Postmaster General's attention has been drawn to a statement in the newspapers to the effect that at a recent meeting of postmen a telegram from Lord Tweedmouth to the following effect was read:—

> "That the Committee's Report clearly indicates that the effective prohibition of Christmas boxes must necessarily be accompanied by the granting of a higher scale of wages to postmen."

The Postmaster General has not seen the actual text of that telegram; but the recommendation of the Committee over which Lord Tweedmouth presided was the adoption of a general rule for all postmen against solicitation of Christmas boxes. A rule somewhat similar to that recommended by the Committee is already in force throughout the whole of the United Kingdom except the metropolis. The Committee go on to say:—

> "Had we seen our way to recommend total prohibition, we might have suggested somewhat higher scales of wages for postmen; but the payment which we have proposed is, we believe, in itself, under the conditions contemplated in this Report, an adequate remuneration for a postman's labour."

The Postmaster General does not, therefore, intend to make any payment in lieu of Christmas boxes. The new rule will be acted upon next Christmas. The Committee's Report, as the hon. Member is aware, has already been laid upon the Table of the House.

Mr. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Cork): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, what is the estimated value of Christmas boxes to the postmen of the city of Cork; whether it is proposed to deprive them of this benefit; and, if so, what equivalent in increased salary is proposed to be given them?

Mr. HANBURY: The Postmaster General is unable to say what is the estimated value of Christmas boxes to the postmen of Cork. It is not proposed to deprive them of this benefit, though it is proposed to prevent them soliciting the public for them verbally, as they are already forbidden to solicit the public for them by the use of printed cards or letters. The Committee expressly stated that the wages of postmen which they recommended constituted an adequate remuneration for a postman's labour, and it is not intended to increase it.

Mr. KNOX: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General (1) whether the Postmaster General will fill the existing vacancies in the Sorting Office, General Post Office, Dublin, on the classes of first class assistant superintendents, clerks, and first class sorting clerks, before the recommendations of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Post Office Establishments are put into effect; and if, in view of the statement contained in the Report of that body that promotions should be made with as much celerity as possible, he intends to bring the strength of these classes to its full standard before the 1st April; and (2) whether he is aware that one vacancy has existed in the rank of first class assistant superintendents for the past nine months, and seven and six vacancies in that of the clerks' class and first class sorting clerks, respectively, for the past two years?

Mr. HANBURY: The Postmaster General proposes to fill the existing vacancies in the Sorting Office, General Post Office, Dublin, on the classes of first class assistant superintendents and clerks as soon as the authorities in Ireland are in a position to make the necessary recommendations on the qualifications of the officers eligible for promotion. Having regard to the recommendation of the Tweedmouth Committee, that classification between first class and second class sorting clerks should be abolished, he is not in a position, without further inquiry, to say whether he will or will not fill up the vacancies on the first class of sorting clerks. The hon. Member is under a misapprehension as regards the dates mentioned in the second part of the Question. The vacancy for a first class superintendent occurred in September last, and none of the other vacancies have existed for one year—three of them having only occurred since the beginning of November.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES (CALLAN BOARD OF GUARDIANS).

Mr. **PATRICK O'BRIEN** (Kilkenny): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will inquire upon what grounds the Callan Board of Guardians have failed to provide labourers' cottages for James Walsh and James Fitzgerald, of Kilmanagh; whether he is aware that Kilmanagh is badly provided with labourers' cottages; and will he cause another inquiry to be held by the Local Government Board into the matter?

Mr. **GERALD BALFOUR**: The Board of Guardians proposed to build cottages for these men; but the Local Government Board, on consideration of the evidence taken at the Inquiry, were unable to sanction the proposal, and communicated to the Guardians the grounds of objection to the cottages. Four cottages are about to be sanctioned for the electoral Division of Kilmanagh, in addition to nine already authorised, and 58 in the whole Union in addition to 100 already sanctioned. There seems no reason for holding a further Inquiry in the matter.

MARYLEBONE COUNTY COURT.

Mr. **WOODS**: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if his attention has been called to the case of a servant girl, named Roberts, who brought a case into the Marylebone County Court, on 3rd March 1897, for the recovery of £1 8s. 4d., being one month's wages due to her from her employer; whether he is aware that this servant gave the customary notice at the end of the first fortnight, to leave at the end of the month; that the employer refused to pay her wages for the month worked; and that Judge Stonor, who tried the case, gave a verdict to the employer with costs; and whether, seeing that this decision is in direct opposition to the custom which is almost universally recognised, and of such importance to domestic servants, he can take any course of action that will give greater authority to the custom now recognised?

*Sir **MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY**: I have seen a newspaper report of the case, but I am unable to say whether the facts are correctly stated in the Question. My jurisdiction does not extend to civil cases, and I have no power to take the action which I understand the hon. Member to suggest.

DOMESTIC SERVANTS' CHARACTERS.

Mr. **WOODS**: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that the Domestic Servants' Union presented a petition to the House of Commons on 26th March 1896, containing 10,000 signatures, praying for an alteration in the Law which enables an employer to refuse giving a true character to a servant leaving his employment; and whether he can see his way on an early day to introduce an Amendment to the Master and Servants Act to obviate the present difficulty?

*Sir **MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY**: I am aware that such a petition was presented last March; but, though there is doubtless much hardship, I fear it is not of a kind which, as far as I can see, can be remedied by legislation.

PENRHYN QUARRIES.

Mr. **WOODS**: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been called to the fact that the negotiations between Lord Penrhyn and his employés have failed to effect a settlement; and whether the Department over which he presides has recently taken any steps, either by correspondence or by urging the combatants to avail themselves of the use of the Conciliation Act; and, if not, is he in a position to take any action whatever on behalf of the Government to bring the parties closer together?

The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Lord George Hamilton, Middlesex, Ealing, in the absence of Mr. Ritchie): The information of my right hon. Friend leads him to believe that the present negotiations between Lord Penrhyn and his employés are not closed, and he trusts they may have a successful issue. Throughout the dispute he has lost no opportunity of endeavouring to promote negotiations, but no further action on his part at present seems required.

SWINE FEVER (BISHOPS WALTHAM).

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether his attention has been called to a serious case of swine fever at Bishops Waltham, on the estate of General Elrington, in November last, where 66 pigs of considerable value were ordered to be slaughtered by the local committee in the presence of an inspector acting under the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act; whether he is aware that 15 of the carcasses were subsequently dressed with a view to being consigned to the Central Meat Market in London; that five of the number were found to be affected with the fever spots and were subsequently buried; and that the remaining ten were nevertheless sent off to London for sale, although they came from the very same pen or stye as those diseased; and whether such action by inspectors is in accordance with the regulations of the Department, after the owner had received an official notice that all the pigs in the styes affected were to be slaughtered and buried?

MR. LONG: Yes; I am aware of the case of swine-fever to which my hon. and gallant Friend refers, and I have caused full inquiry to be made respecting it. The 67 pigs which were slaughtered by order of one of the Board's Inspectors were killed, not because they were diseased but because they had been exposed to infection, and as a matter of fact none of them showed any signs of illness. Fifteen of the pigs were found to be fit for the butcher and were dressed accordingly, but on a further examination prior to the consignment of the carcasses for sale, six of them were found to be somewhat discoloured and these were accordingly withdrawn and subsequently buried. Discolouration frequently arises from ordinary causes, and there is no evidence whatever that in this case it was due to the presence of swine fever. Under the Board's regulations the most stringent precautions are taken with a view to prevent meat unfit for human food from being consigned for sale, and in the case in question the carcasses sold were examined by a butcher on two successive days, and were subsequently passed as sound by the sanitary inspector and the meat salesman on arrival at their destination.

POLICE SUPERVISION.

CAPTAIN PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, with regard to his statement that the punishment of police supervision is mainly given by Courts of Quarter Sessions, owing to offences against property, to which this sentence is specially suited, being tried chiefly before such Courts, it is the case that of 1,626 prisoners convicted at Assizes of those particular offences in 1895, only 13, or less than 0·80 per cent., were sentenced to this form of punishment, while of 5,032 such convictions at Quarter Sessions no less than 343, or 6·77 per cent., were so punished; and if this is the case, seeing that the explanation of these figures given in the Report on Judicial statistics does not attempt to explain away this difference but merely to render it less surprising, he can take some steps to diminish in the future the large proportion of these sentences passed by Courts of Quarter Sessions.

*__SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY__: The hon. Member's figures are accurate, but I cannot accept the conclusion that he appears to draw from them. The sentence of police supervision is passed only on habitual criminals, and if passed in proper cases, where it is effective in restraining from crime, it is a more lenient method of dealing with the offender than a long term of penal servitude. The matter is one in which I must decline to interfere with the discretion either of the Judges or of the Courts of Quarter Sessions.

BUILDING GRANTS (ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS).

MR. F. A. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether all schools with building grants are required to be held in trust for elementary education; whether the Education Department permits managers of schools which have received a building grant to repay that grant, and thereupon to have a right to dispose of the premises; and, if so, under what conditions; what steps are taken to secure that after the building grant is repaid the managers shall still give effect to the trusts under which the school is held; and whether the Education Department or the Charity

Commission have any means of securing that all the money derived from these buildings, whether as rent or purchase money, shall be applied in accordance with the trusts of the school?

SIR J. GORST: All schools with building grants are required to be held in trust for elementary education. Building grants can be repaid; but unless special provision be made in the first deed, any disposal of the premises is governed by Section 14 of the Schools Sites Act, 1841. Trustees cannot vary the trusts without obtaining a scheme from the Charity Commissioners.

VOLUNTEER BATTALIONS AT ALDERSHOT.

COLONEL DALBIAC (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War if it has been decided to send provisional battalions of Volunteers from the metropolitan brigades to Aldershot in August next?

MR. BRODRICK: I am not aware of any proposal to send provisional battalions of Volunteers to Aldershot.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): Is it intended not to have any provisional battalion at Aldershot at all?

MR. BRODRICK: I am not aware of any Order.

ELECTRIC TRAM SPEED ((BALL'S BRIDGE TO DALKEY, COUNTY DUBLIN).

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has received memorials asking for an acceleration of the speed of the electric trams running from Ball's Bridge to Dalkey; and whether the Board of Trade will permit the same rate of speed as is allowed on other electric traction lines in Great Britain and Ireland?

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON (for Mr. RITCHIE): Yes, Sir, the Board of Trade have received memorials on the subject, and are considering them. There is no uniform rate of speed for electric tramays, each case must be dealt with on its merits.

REGULATIONS FOR PREVENTING COLLISIONS AT SEA.

*MR. CHARLES WILSON (Hull, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in consequence of representations made by the German Government and by the fishing vessels of this country, he will consider the desirability of omitting the word "sailing" in the first and second lines of Article 26 of the Regulations for preventing Collisions at Sea. I would tell the right hon. Gentleman that there was a Debate in the Imperial German Parliament on the subject this year, and that this proposal received their support?

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON (for Mr. RITCHIE): The representations to which the hon. Member refers are receiving the careful consideration of the Board of Trade. Before coming to any definite decision in the matter it will be necessary to ascertain the views of the several interests concerned, and steps are being taken with that object in view.

BRITISH TROOPS IN INDIA (HEALTH).

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if he will ascertain the views of the Government of India with reference to the protection of the health of the British troops in India before stating to the House the action which Her Majesty's Government propose to take?

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: I have for some time past been in communication with the Viceroy, and I propose to lay on the Table of the House a Dispatch addressed to the Government of India, in which the views of Her Majesty's Government are stated at length.

GENERAL LAURIE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest): Can the noble Lord say when it is probable that the answer from the Government of India will be obtained?

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: I think it better for my hon. and gallant Friend to read the dispatch.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): In order to dispel misconception on this Question, will the noble Lord use his influence with the Government to give the House facilities for its discussion?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I hope and believe the dispatch is of such a character as not to call for any Debate in this House. Perhaps the dispatch had therefore be better read first by hon. Gentlemen.

METROPOLITAN POLICE BOOTS.

CAPTAIN NORTON : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, as regards the alleged loss to the members of the Metropolitan Police Force, by the manner in which the change of system for the supply of their boots is to be brought about, seeing that the matter in dispute is entirely one of figures and facts, he will consent to place the case before an independent chartered accountant and abide by his decision ?

*SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY: No, Sir ; I am afraid I cannot assent to any such proposal.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE COMMITTEES (IRELAND).

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.) : I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland when will he introduce a Bill to define the rate from which the expenses of School Attendance Committees, appointed under the Irish Education Act, 1892, shall be defrayed ?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR : With my right hon. Friend's permission, I will reply to this question. On the 11th February, in reply to the hon. Member for the St. Patrick's Division of Dublin, I stated very fully the intentions of the Government in this matter, and to that reply I am afraid I have nothing to add.

CONVICT PRISON WARDERS.

MR. E. H. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether—inasmuch as the classes at Chelmsford and Hull for the instruction of warders prepare them only for service in local prisons, and not for special duties required in connection with the discipline and the open air labour of the convict establishments—the Commissioners will also institute a class for the instruction of officers in convict prisons ?

*SIR MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY : The hon. Member is under a misapprehension ; the course of instruction is devised to meet the requirements of both the local and the convict services, as he will see if he will refer to Appendix 15 of the last Report of the Prison Department.

SCIENCE AND ART GRANT (IRELAND).

MR. G. MURNAGHAN (Tyrone, Mid) : I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education (1) whether the new rules of the Science and Art Department provide that a pupil on the roll of National Schools in Ireland cannot be enrolled in a science class ; and (2) whether the shares of the Science and Art Grant that Ireland received last year is proportional to $\frac{9}{80}$ths of the amount paid to England ; and, if not, will steps be taken in future to divide the grant on this basis ?

SIR J. GORST : The answer to paragraph (1) is in the affirmative, but for this session schools have the option of working under the old rules. The Irish schools only earned $\frac{6}{80}$ths of the total Science and Art Grant for 1895-96 ; but, it is open to Ireland to earn a larger proportion under the Regulations of the Science and Art Department, which are the same for the whole of the United Kingdom.

MR. MURNAGHAN : May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it is not the fact that, owing to the new rules made by the Education Department it is impossible for the Irish schools to obtain the grants they formerly obtained ?

SIR J. GORST : The hon. Gentleman is under a misconception. The Irish schools are treated in exactly the same way as the English schools, not only by the Education Department but by the Science and Art Department.

MR. KNOX : I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education (1) whether by the new rules of the Science and Art Department results fees gained in the Irish Intermediate Examinations are ordered to be treated as endowments, and deducted from any sum earned as science and art result fees ; and (2) whether the same rule has been applied in the case of grants made to schools in Great Britain under the Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Act, or in Wales under the Intermediate Education Act ; and, if not, what is the reason for treating the schools in the two countries on a different basis ?

SIR J. GORST : The statements in the first paragraph are correct, except that the fees will only be deducted from the sum earned for elementary mathematics, as is done with English endowments. The grants mentioned in the second paragraph are not endowments, and the rules referred to do not apply to them.

MR. KNOX: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the greater part of the intermediate education allowances comes from precisely the same equivalent grant as that out of which the sums are paid to the County Councils in England; and will he reconsider his decision?

SIR J. GORST: I do not think the hon. Gentleman's statement is correct.

ARMAGH UNION WORKHOUSE.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether the Local Government Board has ordered Mr. Agnew to hold a sworn inquiry on 1st April into the stock-keeping arrangements of the Armagh Union Workhouse; (2) whether he is aware that Mr. Agnew has already sent in a report which was unfavourable to the master; and that the guardians of the union think that Mr. Agnew's part in the inquiry should be that of a witness and not an inspector holding it; and (3) will he take steps to prevent an inspector, the correctness of whose report in this case has been impugned, from acting as judge and witness at the same time?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The answer to the first paragraph is, Yes. Mr. Agnew has never held an inquiry into the master's conduct. It appears that the Guardians recently passed a Resolution to the effect that, in their opinion, Mr. Agnew would be a necessary witness at the Inquiry. The third paragraph is based on a misapprehension of the functions of an inspector. He takes the evidence laid before him and forwards it to the Local Government Board, who are the judges in the matter, and it is with the Board and not with the Inspector that the decision rests. If any rule such as suggested were laid down, it would be necessary to send another inspector to hold an inquiry in every case in which the district inspector had called attention to matters requiring investigation, which it is part of an inspector's duty to do.

MR. FARRELL: Am I to understand that Mr. Agnew is still going to hold this inquiry?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: Yes, Sir.

INDIA OFFICE (AUDIT DEPARTMENT).

MR. W. HAZELL (Leicester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether the retirement of one of the senior clerks in the Audit Department of the India Office has been sanctioned; and whether, as another appointment to the senior class would involve an increase of charge upon Indian revenues, a promotion to a senior clerkship will, in accordance with the course pursued in two cases in 1892–93 in regard to the Accountant General's Department, be deferred until such time as the official now retired on reduction of establishment would have been superannuated under the age limit, or whether the redundant clerkship can be now abolished?

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: The retirement of a senior clerk in the India Audit Office has been recently sanctioned and a promotion to the senior class has been made. This does not involve an increase of charge upon Indian revenues, for, including the pension of the senior clerk who has retired, it results in an immediate saving of £83 a year, and an average annual saving during the next 15 years of £41.

HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE (CHANCERY DIVISION CLERKS).

MR. E. BOULNOIS (Marylebone, E.): I beg to ask the Attorney General whether it is the fact that the Lord Chancellor has authorised the Chief Clerks of the Judges of the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice to adopt the style and title of Masters of the Supreme Court; if so, what power has he to alter the title given them by the Legislature in 1852 (15 and 16 Vict. c. 80) and to confer upon them the title of Masters of the Supreme Court, which the Legislature has assigned by the Judicature (Officers) Act, 1879 (42 and 43 Vict. c. 78), to other persons appointed under a different patronage, with a different qualification and discharging different duties; and whether the sanctioning the use by a class of public officers, whom the Legislature has designated by a particular name, of a designation appropriated by Statute to another and different class of officers, whose duties are essentially different, will be reconsidered?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): I think the Question of my hon. Friend is framed under a misapprehension. The matter is not now controlled by the Act of 1832, but by the Judicature Act under which the majority of the Presidents of the Divisions have power to effect the change of name referred to. I have laid upon the Table of the House the Order of the Lord Chancellor and Lord Chief Justice dealing with the matter, which has been confirmed by the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury.

COUNTY COURT RULES (TRAVELLING EXPENSES).

MR. G. LAMBERT (Devon, South Molton): On behalf of the hon. Member for Halifax (Mr. A. BILLSON) I beg to ask the Attorney General whether he is aware that considerable dissatisfaction exists with regard to the proposed new County Court Rule requiring a deposit for travelling expenses from plaintiffs when the defendant resides more than 20 miles from the Court; and whether the operation of the Rule may be postponed pending further consideration?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The operation of the Rule has been postponed until the month of May in order that the County Court Judges may meet together to consider the objections which have been raised to it. I ought, however, to add that the Rule was passed to restrict the growing practice of summoning defendants to Courts at a great distance from their place of residence.

FOREIGN ORDERS.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, having regard to the Regulations respecting foreign Orders and medals, published at the Foreign Office in February, 1883, and still in force, by which it is provided that no subject of Her Majesty shall accept a foreign Order from any foreign country or wear the insignia thereof without having previously obtained Her Majesty's permission, Her Majesty's Government will, in view of the recent incidents in Armenia, Constantinople, and Crete, recommend Her Majesty to withhold her permission to the acceptance of such Orders and the wearing of such insignia by any of her subjects in future?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: The Rules to which the Question refers are very precise in their character. But infringements never come before the Executive, nor has the Government any power to interfere.

In answer to a further Question by Mr. MACNEILL,

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY said: I do not imagine that there is any constitutional authority which has the power.

CRETE.

MR. J. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs a Question of which I have given him private notice—whether his attention has been directed to the circumstances under which the Seaforth Highlanders entered Candia on Friday last; whether they were conducted through the town by Turkish bands; whether they were reviewed by the Turkish Governor on the square, where, in the presence of both bodies of troops, the British officer thanked the Turkish Governor for the reception which had been given to the Highlanders; whether the Turkish troops left the square to the strains of the Turkish national air played by the band of the Highlanders; and whether such incidents were calculated to inspire confidence in the minds of the Cretan insurgents? [*Opposition cheers.*]

MR. CURZON: Her Majesty's Consul and the British Military Commissioner reported by telegraph, on the 26th inst., that the British troops landed at Candia without incident, and were escorted to the barracks by half a Turkish battalion with a band. Our telegrams contain no information on the other points mentioned in the Question. I may add that I can see nothing improper in a friendly reception being given to the international troops by the garrison of a town which they have come to protect, simply because that garrison happens to be composed of Turks. [*Loud Ministerial cheers.*]

MR. CHANNING: I beg to ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs a Question of which I have given him private notice—whether the Admirals were acting within their instructions in shelling the Cretans at Malaxa on Thursday, when the white flag was raised and the garrison in the act of surrendering, and also in again shelling the Christians at Malaxa on Friday; whether it is within the instructions for the Fleet to aid Turkish operations at night, by means of their search lights—[*cries of* "Oh!"]—whether it is true—[*renewed cries of* "Oh!"]—that, although the British Consul and Naval Commanders who rescued the Moslems at Candano and Selinos signed an agreement that these Moslems should not bear arms against the Christians, the Acting Governor General has distributed nearly 3,000 rifles to these men in breach of the agreement; and what steps have been, or are to be, taken to prevent this violation of good faith? [*Cheers.*]

Mr. CURZON: Perhaps the best answer—although I am afraid it will be rather a long one—which I can make to the hon. Member is to read the facts as telegraphed to us by the British Admiral. [*Cheers.*] On the 23rd inst. the Admiral telegraphed that the Turkish force in the guard-house near Malaxa, about one and a-half mile from anchorage, was starving, and that the Cretan insurgents refused permission for supplies of food and forage to pass. Three Turks had been killed in sight of the ship while attempting to victual house. An ultimatum had accordingly been sent by the Admirals to the insurgent chief stating that food must be allowed in, or that force would be used to attain that object. On the 25th inst. he telegraphed that the insurgents in large numbers were preventing the revictualling of the blockhouse in spite of the notice of the Admirals to desist. [*Nationalist laughter.*] The Turkish men-of-war were firing to dislodge them, but if the purpose was not effected the international ships would have to fire. The Admirals had unanimously decided that this step was necessary for the preservation of the blockhouse, which commanded Suda Arsenal. On the same day he telegraphed that the blockhouse had been captured by the insurgents. [*Loud cheers from* Mr. MACNEILL *and other Nationalist Members.*] The Admirals had unanimously decided that it was necessary to open fire and drive insurgents from the position which they had captured in opposition to the written protest. Fire was opened by signal from the Italian Admiral and lasted for six minutes. On fire ceasing the insurgents had apparently looted the blockhouse and then burned it. [*Renewed cheers from* Mr. MACNEILL *and* Mr. DILLON.] On the 26th the Admiral telegraphed that the evacuation of the blockhouse by the Turks on the day before had been due to two Greek cannon, served by Greek troops — [*Nationalist cheers*] — being brought into operation against it out of sight of the ships. The water supply had also been destroyed, and the capture of the blockhouse was in direct disobedience to the Admirals' warning sent to the insurgents—[*ironical laughter from* Mr. MACNEILL]—through the British Consul two days previously. Further, as the position now taken up by the insurgents commanded the arsenal and road to Suda, the Admirals had decided to prevent further encroachment by the fire of the ships. On the 27th the Admiral telegraphed that, owing to the repeated attacks of the insurgents, who now had their cannon on outposts commanding Canea, the Admirals had decided that it would be necessary to treat insurgents as enemies—[*cries of* "Oh!" *and* "Shame," *from* Mr. MACNEILL *and other hon. Members*]—and to demand more troops from their respective Governments before long in order to afford efficient protection to the town under their charge. [*Renewed interruption from* Mr. MACNEILL.] The hon. Member might allow me to read my answer without these most unseemly interruptions. [*Ministerial cheers and Nationalist laughter.*] The further advance of the insurgents must be stopped, great alarm being felt in the town, where famine and disease were already threatening the refugees. On the same day he telegraphed that Colonel Vassos was reported to have received the Admirals' warning and to have replied by ordering the capture of the blockhouse. [*Loud cheers from* Mr. MACNEILL *and other hon. Members.*] Three guns had been brought against it on the southern side. On the 28th the Admiral telegraphed that the insurgents were following up their success against the blockhouse by developing an attack upon a strong earthwork fort held by Turks at the back of Suda Point, and that the general situation upon the island was that Colonel Vassos had declared open war against the Great Powers. [Mr. T. M. HEALY: "Bravo, Vassos!" *and loud cheers from* Mr. MACNEILL.] This is the whole information that we possess; and I am unable to throw any light upon any of the other points mentioned by the hon. Member.

MR. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): Arising out of that answer, can the right hon. Gentleman say whether the Admirals are acting on their own responsibility, or in obedience to instructions from their Governments in prohibiting the landing of ammunition intended for the Greek troops, whilst allowing the landing of ammunition intended for the Turkish troops?

*MR. SPEAKER: I cannot say that that Question properly arises out of the answer of the right hon. Gentleman, and therefore notice of it should be given.

MARKET GARDENERS' COMPENSATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred from Tomorrow till Tuesday, 6th April.

MOTION.

REGULAR AND ELDERS' WIDOWS' FUNDS.

Bill to make provision for the transfer of the assets, liabilities, and management of the Regular Widows' Fund, and of the Elders' Widows' Fund, to the Secretary of State in Council of India, and for other purposes in relation thereto, ordered to be brought in by Lord George Hamilton and Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer; presented accordingly, and Read the First time; to be Read a Second time upon Thursday, and to be printed.—[Bill 179.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

FINANCIAL RELATIONS (GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND).

MR. EDWARD BLAKE (Longford, S.) moved:—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, the Report and Proceedings of the Royal Commission on the Financial Relations of Great Britain and Ireland establish the existence of an undue burden of taxation on Ireland, which constitutes a great grievance to all classes of the Irish community, and makes it the duty of the Government to propose at an early day remedial legislation."

The hon. Member gratefully acknowledged that his Motion had received favourable consideration from more than one influential quarter in the House, but he could not be insensible to the fact that there existed on the part of some hon. Members an indisposition, perhaps an aversion, to the further discussion of Irish grievances, some entertaining the conviction that it was but waste of time, since whatever was said or done Irish people would still remain unreasonably dissatisfied, and others cherishing the belief that Ireland was spoiled and favoured rather than wronged and neglected. He also could not but feel that the argument was devoid of dramatic interest and full of wearisome details; and most of all was he deeply conscious of his own inadequacy for the task imposed upon him. Therefore he earnestly supplicated the kind indulgence of the House while he attempted to sustain the Motion of which he had given notice. [*Cheers.*] This question differed in some respects from many former Irish questions. In this there was more than in those a united Ireland. [*Cheers.*] In those the dominating British delegation very often assumed the part of impartial judges, disinterested persons deciding for the good of Ireland between the views of contending Irish factions. In this the views of Irish Members were but lightly regarded, because, it was said, they were parties, and therefore not fit judges in the cause. But who were the other parties? If Irishmen were the plaintiffs, who were the defendants? The British Members; and their position was more powerful and therefore more invidious than that of Irish Members. If they were happily as united on those Benches as in Ireland, they would still not muster more than one-seventh of the magisterial bench. The other parties in the House could netrualise the voices of Ireland, with about 500 judges to spare. ["Hear, hear!"] British Members, then, were the judges, and it was against their adversaries they must plead to give judgment against themselves. Under those conditions on what could Ireland rest? Whence cometh her hope? She could rest only on that security which a British statesman, in the year 1800, enunciated as adequate. When speaking of this very contingency he said:—

> "But it has been said what security can you give Ireland for the performance of the conditions? If I were asked what security were

necessary, without hesitation I would answer—None. The liberality, the justice, the honour of the people of Great Britain have never yet been found deficient."

It was for those who spoke for Britain to-day to make good the words of Pitt a century ago. [*Cheers.*] And, first, he would ask the House to consider the gravity of the issue. For almost a century Britain had ruled Ireland in the House of Commons. Let British Members recall the economic conditions of the two islands, the ruling and ruled. Those considerations should give pause before the dismissal of the plaint. Take population: At the beginning of the century Ireland had five millions against a little over 10 millions for Britain. She had now 4½ millions, less by half a million, or 10 per cent. of a loss. Britain had 34 millions, having increased by 24 millions, or 240 per cent. Had Ireland increased proportionally she would now have over 16 millions; her relative loss was 11½ millions in a century. She had half as many; she had little more than one-eighth of Britain. But even this view was inadequate. Half a century ago Ireland had 8½ millions; she lost two millions directly and indirectly through the famine, and since then so many more that, after eliminating the natural increase, her population has fallen four millions, or by 47 per cent., in half a century, an absolutely unexampled condition. [*Cheers.*] Britain half a century ago had 20 millions; her increase is 14 millions, or 70 per cent. A proportionate Irish increase would make an Irish population of 14,300,000; her relative loss was nearly 70 per cent.—10 millions in half a century. Take the condition of the people: Of that dreadfully reduced population, large masses there were whose scale of existence was far below that of the corresponding large masses of Great Britain, while Britain's increased numbers enjoyed a steady and a rapid advance in the standard of comfort. In Britain the scale of living and the margin against emergency were such that famine was unknown and impossible. In Ireland the scale was so low and the margin so narrow that even one bad crop tended to famine in important areas and necessitate public aid. There was painful evidence of chronic penury and want in many districts—evidence and facts which, if they could be reported of a British district, would absolutely appal the Englishmen whom he addressed. [*Cheers.*] Britain imported from Ireland and abroad vast quantities of the best food for the consumption of her masses in addition to what she raised. Ireland also raised large quantities of the best foods, a very great part of which she exported to Britain, importing in exchange inferior commodities, Indian corn, and American bacon, the best her poverty-stricken masses could afford to use. [*Cheers.*] Ireland was in proportion to population the fourth meat-producing country in the world; she was the 16th meat consumer. [*Cheers.*] England was the 16th meat producer; she was the fourth meat consumer. The average Poor Law valuation of Ireland was under £3, about equal to the valuation of the poorest East London union. The paupers of Ireland were per 1,000 in 1864, 52; in Britain 49—nearly equal proportions; in 1895 they were in Ireland 95, being nearly double; in Britain 26, being almost half. [*Cheers.*] From equality they had become nearly four to one. Emigration had been draining from Ireland those in the prime of life. The very old and the very young remained, and thus the absolute and relative efficiency of the population had been seriously lowered. Inferior conditions had produced other painful results. The proportion of deaf mutes was near one-third larger than in England, of blind two-fifths, of lunatics one third; and the proportion of births over deaths was in Ireland five, in Britain 11. Take manufactures and agriculture: Irish manufactures had largely declined; while between 1841 and 1891 the whole population diminished by 42 per cent., that portion engaged in manufacture diminished by 61 per cent. Now only 27 per cent. of the population was urban. In the same time the manufactures of Britain had immeasurably increased, and now 71 per cent. of her population was urban. Thus, Ireland had become more and more actually and relatively dependent on the land; 73 per cent. of her people lived in the country and 64 per cent. were dependent on agriculture. It followed that she had suffered enormously, absolutely, and relatively by the fall in the prices of agricultural products, accentuated in her case by the loss of local town markets; and her gross and net return from agriculture had been largely reduced, thus diminishing her yearly resources. Britain had become more and more independent of agriculture. Under 29 per cent. of her people were rural, and therefore less affected as a country by the fall of agricultural prices, while agriculture had been helped by the widespreading urban districts. Take commerce: Ireland had hardly any foreign commerce or investments, and a large part of her yearly income was drained by absentee landlords and mortgagees. Though Ireland had a population between one-seventh and one-eighth of Britain, the number of her railway passengers were but 1-37th, her tons of railway freight 1-70th, telegrams 1-18th, postal and money orders 1-19th—all facts showing comparative stagnation. Sir Robert Giffen calculated, taking into account all the circumstances, that the incomes of the wage-earning classes in Ireland were, man for man, little more than half of those of the wage-earning classes in England. The gross income or resources of Ireland were estimated too highly at £70,000,000; those of Britain too low at £1,400,000,000. The capital of Ireland was reckoned in 1820 at £563,000,000; that of Britain was thought to be £1,500,000,000. Ireland was now thought to have £400,000,000, a reduction of nearly one-third, while Britain was thought to have £10,000,000,000, or an increase of sevenfold. Ireland had sunk from being over one third to being 1-25th in capital. These comparisons might be easily enlarged, extended, and multiplied; but the bald statement held that the conditions of the two islands were wholly different and increasingly divergent in the extent and kinds of their resources, in their economic circumstances and interests. They showed that the rule of Britain had advanced this country, but had failed to prosper Ireland. [*Cheers.*] They proved that her situation demanded that just and generous consideration of rich and powerful rulers towards the poor and weak island whose destinies this country controlled. ["Hear, hear!"] He would add this contrasting fact, that upon which their claim was founded. The one great point upon which Britain exhibited a decline and Ireland an advance was in the scale of taxation. [*Cheers.*] In Ireland the taxes on commodities which struck the masses were per head, in 1790, 4s.; in 1820, 11s.; in 1894, 22s. They were thus double. In Britain in 1820 they were 48s.; in 1894, 24s. They were half. [*Cheers.*] Irish taxes which had been under one-fourth had become almost equal, notwithstanding the relative poverty of the country. ["Hear, hear!"] Dealing next with the relative taxable capacity of the two islands as contrasted with their actual taxation, the hon. Member said that for the purposes of the Debate it was enough to show the maximum estimate of Ireland's relative capacity reached by any one of 12 out of 13 Commissioners, including one who died. The joint Report found that—

> "while the actual tax revenue of Ireland is about one-eleventh of that of Britain the relative taxable capacity of Ireland is very much smaller and is not calculated by any one of us to exceed 1-20th."

This conclusion was reached after two years' examination and consideration by eminent experts, financiers, statisticians, and Treasury officials. Because of the imputation of bias he should leave out of account all the Irish Members, although some of them ought to count on this question. He should take British Members only, who might by the same process of reasoning have had to contend against an unconscious bias against Ireland. It was reached substantially by Mr. Childers, the first chairman, an eminent economist, financier, and ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer, a man retired from Party politics, who devoted to this service the last years of his life, in the discharge of which he died. It was reached by Lord Welby and Lord Farrer, who had filled the highest posts in the British Treasury and the Board of Trade, and whose public services had been marked by giving to them seats in the Upper Chamber, which had been honoured and strengthened by their accession to its ranks. It was reached by the late Mr. Currie, also eminent in these walks, and who had proved his capacity in other public posts; and by their late colleague, Mr. Hunter, whose ability, brain power, and industry were well known to the House. It was reached substantially by Sir David Barbour, dissentient on other grounds, and of him perhaps it might be said that his distinguished public career abroad permitted him to be admitted as an impartial judge, though marked by Irish birth. There remained just one Commissioner, a respected colleague of theirs, who proceeded on other lines; and even he, he understood, did not negative the conclusion. It had indeed been said that these British Commissioners were tainted because they were said to be favourers of the political scheme of Home Rule. But that was not now a question, though they might make it one, of Home Rule. Home Rule rested on other and wider grounds, and it was an absurd contention, as had been well pointed out by the hon. Member for Plymouth—[*cheers*]—whose sympathetic consideration of the Irish case he gratefully acknowledged—[*cheers*]—to say that these eminent men's views on an economic question were to be regarded less because of their speculations on the political question of Home Rule. Then the House must, as he submitted, give great weight to the conclusions reached by this body of experts, but of like passions with themselves, and subject to the same infirmities, and who, notwithstanding, had given judgment against this country and themselves. It was reached on the evidence of Sir Robert Giffen and Sir Edward Hamilton and other British public servants, the one the able head of the Treasury and the other an economist and statistician of great repute. It was reached after collecting, weighing, and sifting all information suggested from every quarter and applying all tests—population, imports and exports, consumption of duty-paid goods, assessment to Death Duties, assessment to Income Tax, consumption of commodities, other incomes and wages, yearly wealth, aggregate production, capital, comparative progress and capacity, relative effects of fiscal policy, and so on, with statistical facts too numerous to name. It was reached after examination of the principles of taxation and of their application. Some of the Commissioners, however, believed that they saw an Irish surplus over living allowance of perhaps 15 millions, mainly abstracted by taxation, and a British surplus of perhaps 1,100 millions less than tithed by taxation. They saw Irish relative taxable capacity steadily declining, and believed with Sir R. Giffen that a far lower proportion would be the true one, and also that a maximum contribution should be fixed so as to avoid the proved danger of excessively increased expenditure. He asked the House to remember that what had been suggested was put forward only as a maximum, which Lord Farrer in another place had lately described as too high. It had been proved that there was a great disparity and a substantial grievance, and that a remedy was called for. The contribution of Ireland was between one-eleventh and one-twelfth, or nearly twice her maximum relative taxable capacity, and thus reached a minimum excess of two-and-three-quarter millions. He appealed to the Government for relief to Ireland on the ground of fairplay and of the generous consideration due from the strong to the weak. ["Hear, hear!"] But he also based his claim on higher ground—on the ground of treaty and right, justice and equity. ["Hear, hear!"] In 1782 Ireland had partly emerged from that condition of servitude as to her trade and manufactures which was described in 1785 in wounding words by Pitt. From 1782 to 1800 Ireland had a measure of independence, and during the first few years there was peace; and manufactures, productions, and exports all expanded. The taxation was about a million, or 4s. a head, all on consumption, and it met the expenditure. Then came the French war, which was followed by the rebellion, and then a large army was planted on the country in anticipation of and during the negotiations for the Union. These calamities had by 1800 raised the taxation to over two millions and a-half, or 10s. a head. At the time of the Union there was no pretence that Ireland was able to bear the British rate of taxation; her absolute and relative poverty was acknowledged, and calculations were made professing to show the relative resources of the two countries, and to fix the just proportion of contribution for each of them. But the bases of calculation were unsound, narrow, and defective. They included some unfit Irish elements in the calculation, and excluded some proper British elements. The result was an erroneous estimate of relative taxable capacity of two to 15. The population was as one to two; the quota one to seven and a half. The Irish lords protested, calculating that one to 18 was nearer the truth, and they were justified by the event. It was thought possible that a change might be made later, and the British professions were all against any increase of Irish burdens. Pitt assured the House that the Union was not sought from a pecuniary motive. He said that the Union must introduce a larger amount of wealth into Ireland and supply her want of industry and capital, that there was no ground for the apprehension that Britain would tax Ireland more heavily or that Ireland would be subjected to an increase of taxation or a load of debt, and that the contributions imposed upon Ireland would not be greater than her existing necessary expenses. Lord Castlereagh said much the same thing. He asserted that the ratio of Ireland's contribution must ever correspond to her relative wealth and prosperity. He also declared that the Union Parliament would always be able to make abatements in Ireland just as the Parliament of Great Britain had always done in Scotland, and that the local circumstances in Ireland were such that a high duty could not be levied without either making the revenue unproductive or pressing too hardly upon the poorer classes. That statement disposed of the idea that the comparative poverty of the poorer classes in Ireland was to be ignored. The principle of separate entity was in this respect maintained. It was absurd to argue that a country full of contrasts with Great Britain, for which Parliament was legislating separately every day, and whose body of law differed from Britain's in many vital points, was to be regarded as absolutely one with this country. These considerations showed that it was intended to secure and maintain a due recognition of the relative inferior capacity of Ireland as a country so long as that inferiority existed, first by the creation and revision of the quota, and, later, if the other plan were adopted, by due consideration in the laying and due exemption and abatement from the taxes laid in Ireland. If, then, it were possible so to read the Act it ought to be so read. [*Cheers.*] It was not only possible, but inevitable. The seventh section of the Act showed that it was not upon the sole condition of the debts coming into the quota proportion, but also on the determination of Parliament that the circumstances of the two countries would admit of it that the change could take place, and thereafter until this day the principle of regulating the contribution by national circumstances was maintained. Again, it was provided that if the change did take effect, yet the imposition of taxes was subject in Ireland, though not in any county in Scotland or England, to abatements and exemptions. It was recognised, therefore, that the plan might not produce the stipulated result, and it was still intended that that result should be produced by a contribution according to ability, and a remedy was provided for all time. He implored them not to minimise that remedy. That safeguard against national injustice under the indiscriminate system was designed to preserve to Ireland substantially, though not in form, some immunities. Did anyone pretend that it was designed at the time of the Union that the condition of Ireland should be injuriously changed by a later return to indiscriminate taxation? Could the Act of Union have been carried on any such suggestion? ["Hear, hear!"] Then Ireland was not placed in the position of an English county. An English county had no distinctive position, and, besides, it was part of the ruling island. It was quite clear that Ireland had always been entitled to claim that she should be taxed by the United Kingdom substantially in proportion to her relative taxable capacity. It was clear also that, regard being had to that capacity, she had been and was being overtaxed by Parliament. [*Cheers.*] But it was now argued that that was only half the issue, and that there was a question of the application of United Kingdom taxation—that it had to be divided into four sets of estimates, one for England, one for Scotland, and one for Ireland, and one for the United Kingdom; that the contribution of each of the three countries was to be charged first with its own estimate; that the obligation of proportionate contribution applied only and specifically to the newly proposed United Kingdom estimate; and that, therefore, it was only in respect of the balance available for this new and separate estimate that any question of over-taxation could arise. It was to the recognition and to the application of this principle that the proposed new Commission was mainly directed, and against that proposal Irish Members protested. [*Cheers.*] What support did this contention derive had been experienced. The economic condition of Ireland was very bad. The great famine inflicted upon her a frightful blow, and thus her relative inferiority was increased. Few of the changes in Irish taxation were very adverse to Ireland, save the tobacco taxes, until 1853, when Mr. Gladstone proposed the extension of the income tax to Ireland as a temporary measure. The right hon. Gentleman acknowledged the greater poverty of the masses, but urged that that did not exempt the wealthy from the discharge of their obligations, an argument perfectly valid in the readjustment as between the classes of the Irish community and the total share of her taxation, but quite fallacious when applied as a reason for increasing that total share. As a set-off, he wiped out the famine fund of four millions, which the Lords' Committee had declared as to two millions should have been more properly a grant than a loan. But the temporary income tax was made permanent, and the burden had enormously outweighed the boon. Mr. Gladstone began the raising of the spirit duties, and the result of that operation was to increase the Irish taxation by over two millions of money, or over 40 per cent. Thus, while the average revenue of Britain was not more than during the war at the beginning of the century, her population and wealth had greatly increased, and so the real burden of taxation was much lightened. But the average revenue of Ireland had been raised over a third, and it was borne by a diminishing population out of contracting means. The change took place when Ireland was staggering under the blow of the famine, the after effects of which were accentuated by the added burdens. Complete assimilation had not yet been attempted. Much cry had been made about four millions of British taxation not imposed on Ireland. Its imposition would not affect the masses of that community; it was mainly on wealth, and its estimated yield, if imposed on Ireland, would be only £150,000, or in the proportion of 1-27th. The general effect of the British fiscal policy had been to abolish nearly all duties on raw materials and food, substituting direct taxation on income and property, and heavy duties on three or four articles of wide and general consumption. Those were the articles most largely consumed in Ireland; while the articles freed were so freed mainly for the benefit of Britain. He did not object to the adoption of free trade, or of any other policy advantageous to the interests of the great bulk of the United Kingdom; but he averred that the relative advantages and disadvantages ensuing to each country, affecting, as they did, the relative taxable power of each, must be considered. It was true, as Senior proved in 1864, that, considering capacity, England was the most lightly, while Ireland was the most heavily, taxed of countries. [*Cheers.*] The second great purpose to which the proposed new commission was directed was to dispute the possibility of undue burdens through indirect taxation. They were dealing with two countries which the political Union did not physically unite or economically assimilate; two countries so different that, when the treaty was made, provisions were included for continued separate consideration; two countries so different that even in other vital matters their laws remained divergent. In so far as they did not apply an efficient general remedy, they could not expect Ireland—in consequence of her different economic conditions and her narrow resources the taxation pressed more heavily on her—in the exercise of her free right—[*cheers*]—to accept your answer that there was the same inequality with Britain too. The right to separate treatment was recognised by treaty, and when they held by the treaty, surely Unionists would do the same. [*Laughter.*] Unhappily the two countries had more and more diverged in the matters relevant to taxation; there was an increasing difference as to their relative taxable capacity and their economic condition. The taxes pressed hardly on a relatively poor country like Ireland where the main burden fell on the poorer classes. It was said that the indirect character of the taxation deprived Ireland of the right to complain or to ask for separate treatment, but at the time of the Union all taxes in Ireland were indirect, and yet the principle was recognised of separate treatment and revision. The speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was to the effect that the consumption being voluntary that was the best test of that capacity, and that, therefore, no wrong was done, but the right hon. Gentleman wanted them to pay before they had the power to consume. Who would justify now the levelling up in 1800, or in 1853, or in 1860? Why were the taxes kept relatively lower for 40 years? He thought that the consumption of the masses must be taken as a whole, as that which they find it necessary to consume. It was their habit to consume certain articles, and they were unable to forego them. The Chancellor of the Exchequer did not find much anxiety, for well he knew that the settled habits and tastes of the people, their wants, their cravings, their determination to have their tea, their tobacco, and their liquor amounted almost to "must," and it was a mockery to call this taxation voluntary. [*Cheers.*] The Chancellor of the Exchequer built the whole fabric on the principle that the people must have these things, and therefore must pay for them; but he went gaily on his way until there was this sudden outbreak of free will. There was a serious grievance of inequality which was self-evident. They would see from the evidence that in some parts of Donegal, in looking into the little family budget, that very little but tea and tobacco was consumed. Then it was said that the tax on whisky was a tax on excess, on the drunkard, and the Member for Bodmin said that if too much money were taken from Ireland it was because too much whisky was drunk there. To the whole line of this argument he demurred absolutely. The money came from those who drank tea and smoked tobacco. The vast portion that was consumed was consumed by those who were not drunkards —["hear, hear!"]—and that made it a general tax on the masses. He denied that more liquor was consumed in Ireland in proportion to her population than in Britain. Ireland, as compared with Britain was a sober country—[*cheers*]—and in England they were able to get their drink cheap at Irish and Scotch expense. There was here a gross inequality under a nominally equal system. They need not go to tea and coffee drinking countries for examples. Not only was Irish taxation excessive, it was grossly partial in its operations. In 1893 the expenditure on beer in Great Britain was £88,627,000—[*cries of* "Shame" *and laughter*]—or £2 13s. per head. In Ireland it was £6,291,000, or £1 7s. 2d. per head, so that the Briton spent all but twice as much on beer as the Irishman. [*Cheers.*] But it would be said, "Oh, we all know that the Briton drinks beer and the Irishman whisky! What about whisky?" The expenditure on spirits in Great Britain was £48,571,000, or £1 9s. per head. In Ireland it was £6,144,000, or £1 6s. 6d. per head. [*Cheers.*] Thus more was spent on spirits in Great Britain than in Ireland, and Great Britain preserved her superiority in both branches of the competition. [*Cheers.*] While the Briton spent £4 2s. on beer and spirits, the Irishman only spent £2 13s. 8d., and yet some British statesman would tell his enthusiastic constituents that Irishmen consumed too much drink. It was not for Great Britain to preach free will and probity to Irishmen or defend injustice on her part by alleging excess on theirs. [*Cheers.*] More than this, the tax on 60 gallons of beer was equal to the tax on one gallon of whisky. Out of the Briton's drink bill of £4 2s., 16s. 1d. went in taxation, while of the Irishman's bill of £2 13s. 8d., 13s. 10½d. represented taxation, so that if the Irishman paid at the same rate as the Briton his tax would be 10s. 6d. Thus his excess was 3s. 4½d., which for Ireland meant £780,000. ["Hear, hear!"] Complaints of excessive taxation had been made for generations from the Irish Benches. In 1864 the matter was referred to a Select Committee, and in later years there were ineffectual Motions and remonstrances; but the question became demonstrably urgent on the occasion of the Home Rule Bill of 1886, when the financial proposals involved the reconsideration of the whole problem, coupled with an attempt, in view of Irish self-government, to divide what had been the United Kingdom expenditure into Imperial and local, based, of course, on the respective legislative spheres of the Imperial and the proposed local Legislature. In 1890, when a Unionist Government was in power, the present First Lord of the Admiralty, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, granted a Committee for the purpose, as the right hon. Gentleman said, of seeing "whether Scotland or Ireland should be relieved of any portion of the taxation they now pay." This Committee sat but once, when it called for Treasury Returns. The efforts to reappoint it failed because of the demand of the Welsh Members for similar separate consideration for Wales. This proceeding involved the recognition of the right of Ireland and Scotland as countries to separate consideration. ["Hear, hear!"] There had been also in recent years recognitions of the separate condition of Ireland and Scotland in connection with Imperial grants in aid of local rates. These grants were based, not on the plan of applying the total aid all over the United Kingdom as one taxable entity, but on the theory, though not without exception later as against Ireland, that each of the three divisions was a taxable unit, to which was being returned, for expenditure by the minor local authorities, a portion of the general taxation; and, therefore, that the return should be on the basis of the proportions in which each of the units had contributed to the fund. Last Session, when agricultural distress throughout the United Kingdom was to be aided, this device was most unwarrantably expanded, so as to limit the relief of Ireland by making the grant in form a relief to local rates in England and thus applying, as he thought erroneously, the proportional system. And so those who opposed the view that Irishmen were entitled to separate treatment as to taxation, themselves insisted in some degree, on separate treatment in expenditure. ["Hear, hear!"] They must hold by the view that the money which that Parliament voted, expended, and controlled for the purpose of carrying on government in Ireland was in reason, and in the sense of the Union Act, Imperial expenditure. This view was their only protection against the injustice which would ensue from Great Britain's being at liberty to fix the scale and direct the mode, while Ireland was obliged to pay. The objection of inequality would be fully met if, for the purpose of ascertaining the grand total to which Ireland should contribute, the analogous amount raised locally in Britain towards these two objects were added to the sum of the Imperial Estimate. Thus, Ireland would bear her proportionate share. The general result would be perhaps so to enlarge the total Imperial Estimate as to reduce the over-taxation by about £300,000, or to about 2½ millions on the minimum Estimate. The adoption of this plan afforded not the least justification for the proposed breaking up of the Imperial expenditure, which it rather kept intact; still less did it need a new Royal Commission. [*Irish cheers.*] If, for argument's sake, the principle of breaking up the Imperial expenditure were admitted, they quarrelled grievously with the details. On these, also, all the data for judgment were before them, and the questions were peculiarly for settlement by Parliament on the initiative of the Government. The speech of the First Lord adopted the classification of the Treasury, and based on it the assertion that Ireland contributed but one-thirty-second to what he called Imperial expenditure. Glancing at the details of this division, he observed that Ireland was charged with the constabulary, an armed semi-military force, maintained at enormous cost, far beyond any conceivable need for the policing under normal conditions of such a country; a force and scale of expenditure directly due to the Union, and doing almost entirely Imperial work. [*Irish cheers.*] Ireland was charged with the Imperial expenditure on the great national subject of education, with the collection of the Imperial revenue, the administration of justice, the Post Office, the Civil Service generally, and the viceregal establishment. All these were obviously Imperial. The scale of expenditure, moreover, was expensive, extravagant, centralised, and on the Imperial scale. Let them look at the salaries and numbers of the Judges—[*Irish cheers*]—and the emoluments of Bar and Bench as contrasted with those in this country, and still more in poorer countries. Let them contrast the cost of departments with the cost even here. The whole system was unsuited to the circumstances, and beyond the means of Ireland. ["Hear, yond the means of Ireland. ["Hear, hear!"] It was Great Britain that framed the Estimates and passed the votes. Let them give to Ireland the usual stimulus to economy—some profit from the saving—[*Irish cheers*]—before they complained that she did not insist on pruning the present extravagance. It was not only to the Irish part of this divided Estimate that they objected, but to the Imperial part as well. He believed the Act of Union contemplated and provided that Ireland should contribute towards the expenditure of the Imperial Parliament, no matter where that money was spent or how it was applied. But if they would destroy this system, cut up the accounts, and enter into the question of the separate or relative interest of Britain and of Ireland in the different expenditures, depend upon it they would have to grapple with their Imperial as well as with their local Estimates. ["Hear, hear!"] The Irish people rested on the contract; Great Britain proposed a change. Then they must look at the new Imperial Estimates. Let them look at the Navy, the expenditure on which was Britain's insurance premium; the Army, mainly required for the purposes of the Indian and Colonial Empire, and for the security of her commercial interests; and the debt charge contracted for wars waged in the same interests—could they honestly say that Ireland had the same proportionate interest in these expenditures? The proposed inquiry would, if it ever ended, never satisfy, and the only safe ground was to stand on the Union Act provisions. Two Amendments had been put down, but he ventured to submit that it was both a wiser course and a truer interpretation of Irish opinion to adhere to the comprehensive words of his proposal. It was said that the Commissioners failed to discharge their duty by not reporting upon the question of division. But the bulk of the Commissioners held that that portion of the reference had regard to the political conditions then existing as to Home Rule, and had no foundation under the Act of Union. That was the argument they advanced. On the grounds—first, that it was based upon wrong principles; secondly, that it was useless; and thirdly, that it was dilatory, he objected to, and protested against, the proposed Commission. [*Irish cheers.*] The question of the remedy was not referred to the Commission. It was obviously one for Parliament on the initiative of the Executive to deal with. The Government well knew what the majority of the Irish people thought would embrace a complete and effective remedy. [*Nationalist cheers.*] That remedy the Government refused to adopt; and, both as the depositories of power and as the special defenders of the existing form of Union, they were doubly bound to find a remedy for this grievous injustice existent under the system they maintained and controlled. [*Nationalist cheers.*] The Government had declared for the Union as a compact under which Ireland was secure in all her rights, and protected in all her interests, under which she was assured of just and generous treatment. If they now averred that the Union demanded that Ireland should labour under this injustice they could not but discourage the friends of the Union and place in the hands of its opponents a keen and powerful weapon of attack. [*Nationalist cheers.*]

*MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford) said he rose for the purpose of seconding the motion, and the House would see in that fact an indication that upon the main issues at stake in the matter there was practical unanimity amongst all Irish men. [*Nationalist cheers.*] Possibly when the division took place it might be found that all Irish reepresentatives were not voting in the same lobby; and he must candidly express his personal regret that the terms of the Motion were not modified so as to enable all Irish Members to vote in its favour. But the fact remained that Ireland's case for a remedy of this grievance was being put forward on behalf of no class or Party, but on behalf of the whole people, who were united on this question as he believed they were never united before on a great public question for the last 100 years. [*Nationalist cheers.*] Ireland's complaint was that she was unequally taxed, having regard to her comparative capacity to pay taxation; that the Act of Union placed upon her a burden which it was impossible for her to bear; that it brought her ruin and bankruptcy; that those provisions of the Act of Union which were specially framed for her protection had been systematically violated, and that since the year 1853 in particular, while her population had diminished, and while, in comparison with England, her national wealth had rapidly declined, she had been overtaxed to an extent amounting to between two and three millions per annum. [*Nationalist cheers.*] Was it not almost incredible that facts of this gravity should have remained all through those years and down to this moment without having once attracted the serious attention of Parliament? The fault of that certainly did not rest with Irishmen. The protest which was made against the injustice of the Act of Union at the time it was passed had never ceased to be repeated time after time by every generation of

Irishmen who had appeared in the House [*Nationalist cheers.*] But those Irishmen ever failed to gain the ear of the House, and to induce Parliament to deal with the question in a serious way; and the great and incalculable good done to Ireland by the late Royal Commission on the financial relations was that it was no longer possible to ignore those facts. The constitution of that Commission made it absolutely necessary for the Imperial Parliament to disregard its findings. The work of the Royal Commission might be roughly divided into two parts. First, that portion in which they investigated the history of the financial relations between the two countries; and secondly, that part which concerned itself with the investigation of the relative taxable capacity of the two countries at the present moment. The historical investigations of the Royal Commission had discovered no new facts. They simply reported facts that had been known to every generation of Irishmen, and which indeed had burned themselves into the memory of the Irish people. But the good they had done by their investigations was that they had brought home a knowledge of those facts to the minds of the people of Great Britain, who after all were the masters of this Parliament. He thought he might assert, without in the least being disrespectful to the House, that until the Reports of the Royal Commission were published, not 3 per cent. of the British Members of the House were acquainted with the historical facts of the financial relations between the two countries. Before the Union Ireland was not under legal, though it was said she was under a moral, obligation to contribute towards any expenditure, either civil or military, outside her own shores. When the constitution of 1782 was established, the taxation of Ireland was not more than one million a year, and her National Debt was under two millions. At the time of the Union, 18 years afterwards, her taxation had increased to 2½ millions and her National Debt had increased to 28 millions, which was due to the expenses of the French war, and also largely to the expenses incurred in suppressing the Insurrection of 1798, which most Irishmen believed was fostered and provoked deliberately as part of British policy in Ireland. [*Nationalist cheers.*] When in 1800 the Treaty of Union was carried, it was arranged that Ireland was for a fixed number of years to contribute taxation in the proportion of 2 to 15 as compared with Great Britain; that when the National Debts of the two countries came to the same proportion as the contributions, the Exchequers might be amalgamated and a system of indiscriminate taxation established. But the Treaty of Union provided that under no circumstances was Ireland to be taxed more than her fair proportion, having regard to her taxable capacity, and that she was to have the advantage of exemptions and abatements as her circumstances demanded. It was now admitted that that proportion of 2 to 15 was an unjust proportion. At the time it was established there were protests against it, not only in the Irish Parliament but in the British Parliament; but Lord Castlereagh and the Irish Government of the day maintained that Great Britain was treating Ireland in an absoultely generous spirit in the matter. There was now, however, the authority of every British Treasury official who had been examined in the matter, from Mr. Smith in 1816 and Mr. Chisholm in 1865 down to Sir Edward Hamilton in 1896, that this proportion was unjust to Ireland, and that it had led to the absolute ruin and bankruptcy of Irish finance. [*Nationalist cheers.*] What was the state of things in 1817, after 17 years' operation of this proportion. The taxation of Ireland had increased four-fold, the national debt of Ireland had increased four-fold, while in the same period the debt of England had only doubled. Though Ireland's taxation during' this period was quadrupled, yet she was never able to pay her proportion of 2 to 15, and her national debt increased until at the end of 16 years it came into the proportion of 2 to 15 in relation to the English debt, and then the Exchequers were amalgamated. But the 7th Article of the Treaty of Union provided that Ireland, if the amalgamation of the Exchequers took place, should be able to claim exemptions and abatements according as her circumstances demanded, so that she should never be called upon to pay more than her fair proportion, according to her relative taxable capacity. The Report of The O'Conor Don, and those members of the Commission who agreed with him, summarised in a few words the historical position of Ireland up to this point. They said:—

> "(1) That Ireland and Great Britain entered into legislative partnership on the clear understanding that they were still, for the purposes of taxation, to be regarded as separate and distinct financial units; (2) that Ireland was to contribute to Imperial expenditure only in proportion to her resources, as far as the same could be ascertained, and that even in the imposition of indiscriminate taxation, if circumstances permitted its adoption, she might claim special exemptions and abatements; and (3) that the Imperial expenditure to which these respective contributions were to be made included not only the whole civil expenditure of Ireland, but even special grants for Irish purposes, which were to remain in operation for 20 years."

That was the position which Ireland now took up—that her constitutional and legal right to special consideration as a distinct part of the United Kingdom had never been extinguished from 1817 to the present day. [*Cheers.*] From a legal point of view it was impossible to maintain that Ireland bore the same relation to Great Britain as one or two English counties did to England. Ireland asserted the legal and constitutional claim to be taxed only in proportion to her taxable capacity. It was clear that this was the intention of those who framed the Act of Union. In every single speech made by Pitt and Castlereagh at this time the same principle was again and again affirmed. ["Hear, hear!"] This principle being admitted, then the real question which the Committee had to consider and Parliament had now to decide, was whether Ireland now paid more than a fair proportion according to her resources. In 1853, Mr. Gladstone, who was the author of a great deal of the financial injustice which had been done to Ireland—[*Ministerial cheers*]—extended the income tax to Ireland, and inaugurated the system of "indiscriminate taxation," as it was called in the Union Act, or, as Mr. Gladstone called it, of "identity of imports." The result of that policy was to increase Ireland's taxation between 1853 and 1860 by no less than 2½ millions per annum. The condition of Ireland at this time was absolutely pitiful. ["Hear, hear!"] She was exhausted after one of the most terrible famines in the history of the world. Her population had diminished by millions; and free trade, which had been of great advantage to manufacturing England, entailed a distinct loss on agricultural Ireland. ["Hear, hear!"] As was very well said by Mr. Childers in one paragraph of his Report:—

> "Just as Ireland suffered in the last century from the protective and exclusive commercial policy of Great Britain, so she has been at a disadvantage in this century from the adoption of a policy of free trade."

Under the scheme inaugurated by Mr. Gladstone the taxation per head in Ireland was increased from 13s. 11d. to £1 5s. 4d., while in the same period in England, whose prosperity had greatly increased, the taxation per head was only increased 3s. Of course, Mr. Gladstone's proposals were protested against by the Irish Members, and equally, of course, the protests went for naught. ["Hear, hear!"] Mr. Gladstone promised that the income tax should only be imposed temporarily in Ireland. It had remained in existence ever since. Mr. Gladstone announced that Ireland was to be compensated by the proposal to forgive her some four millions in respect of loans arising out of the famine. These loans were repayable by annual instalments over a fixed period of years, and representing an annual charge of £250,000 for repayment of capital and interest for that period. So that Ireland would long ago have paid off that debt, while the very first year's yield of the income tax imposed on her was half-a-million; and since 1853 Ireland had paid in income tax some 23½ millions. [*Cheers.*] In his speech proposing this arrangement, Mr. Gladstone said:—

> "If we look to the time when Parliament will be in a position to part with the income tax, Ireland will enjoy for a long term of years a much larger remission of consolidated annuities than it will have to bear of additional burdens in the shape of spirit duty."

These words read quite comically to-day, so much were they the reverse of what had occurred. Mr. Gladstone laid down the principle that Imperial taxes to be levied in Ireland were to be made as quickly as possible identical with those levied in England—in a word, that the indiscriminate taxation alluded to in the Act of Union should be established. The fatal fallacy underlying the whole financial policy of 1853 was that identical taxation on articles consumed in vastly different proportions in England and Ireland was equality of taxation. What had happened was the greatest proof of its absurdity. Equal taxes—but high taxes—were put on articles largely consumed in Ireland. Equal taxes—but low taxes—were put on articles largely consumed in England. Therefore, under this scheme of identical taxation, the burdens had increased in one country and decreased in the other. This "identity of imposts" had increased the taxation of Ireland by 2½ millions. And from that day to the present, taxation per head of the population in Ireland had gone on increasing, while in England the taxation per head of the population had gone on diminishing, notwithstanding the enormous strides in wealth and prosperity made by England, and the comparative decline in Ireland. Thus, between 1851 and 1885 the taxation per head in England was reduced 6s. 2d., and the taxation per head in Ireland was increased 19s. And taking the whole period from the Act of Union to the present day, the taxation per head in Great Britain had fallen from £4 13s. 4d. to £2 0s. 10d.; and in Ireland had increased from 14s. 6d. to £1 8s. 10d. [*Cheers.*] So that in the course of the century, in which England had increased in wealth and prosperity beyond the dreams of man, her taxation per head of the population had diminished by one-half; and during the century, which had meant for Ireland a loss of population and a steady decrease in prosperity, the taxation per head of the population had more than doubled. [*Cheers.*] An interesting little table, made out some years ago by Sir Joseph M'Kenna, exemplified how, in a special way, taxation in Ireland fell on the poorer classes. Taking 1884-85 he showed that for every £1 paid in income tax by England, she paid in miscellaneous taxes £4 12s. 8d.; Scotland, for every £1 paid in income tax, paid in miscellaneous taxes, £6 10s.; but in Ireland for every £1 so paid, Ireland paid in miscellaneous taxes £12 11s. [*Irish cheers.*] It might be taken for granted, therefore, that the taxation imposed in 1853 by Mr. Gladstone was unjust and excessive. He knew of no one who controverted that statement. As far as he knew every member of the Royal Commission agreed with it except one hon. Member who signed a separate Report, and he did not attempt to controvert it. Ireland to-day was suffering from the unjust taxation then imposed, and the real question for the House was what was the fair proportion Ireland should pay, having regard to her comparative taxable capacity to-day. He took it as established, therefore, that Ireland was entitled legally and constitutionally under the articles of the Treaty of Union to be taxed only in proportion to her resources; and, secondly, that excessive and altogether unjustifiable burdens had been cast on the country. What was the taxable capacity of Ireland compared with Great Britain. Speaking generally, he might say that every witness examined before the Royal Commission admitted that the resources of Ireland bore to the resources of Great Britain a much less proportion than their respective contributions to revenue. Sir E. Hamilton, in his evidence, admitted that in the fullest way. But for the purposes of Ireland it was not enough to ascertain what the relative resources of the two countries were, because it was universally admitted that the pressure of taxation on small incomes was heavier in proportion than on large. The standards and tests adopted by the Royal Commission to investigate what was Ireland's annual wealth were as follows:—Population, comparative imports and exports, the consumption of certain duty-paid articles, relative assessment to Death Duties to income tax, and estimated valuation of commodities of primary use naturally consumed. Opinions might differ as to the value of any one of these tests. But, substantilaly the same result followed from them all, and it was not too much to assert that the result finally arrived at must be substantially sound and correct. The result of the application of all these tests was that it had been held by the Commission that the relative annual wealth of Ireland bore a proportion of not more, at the outside, than 1-18th to the annual wealth of England. But the comparative resources of the two countries did not afford a proper test, because taxation pressed more hardly on the poor than on the rich. In finally reporting, therefore, that the relative taxable capacity of Ireland was not more in relation to the taxable capacity of England than 1 to 20, the Commissioners came to a moderate estimate. His own view was of little value; but he considered that the estimate of the Commissioners was altogether too low. He was convinced that the relative taxable capacity of Ireland to Great Britain was much less than 1-20th. But it was a great gain to Ireland that it should have been unanimously decided that 1-20th was the proportion, because when this was reduced to figures and compared with what she paid, she was found to have contributed between two and a half and three millions a year more than her fair share. That substantially, and in a few words, was the Irish case. The answer made was that Ireland received back in the shape of Imperial expenditure within her shores so much more than her share that the balance was redressed. One word upon this question of expenditure from the point of view of the Irish Nationalists. Ireland was probably one of the poorest countries in Europe, and her Government one of the most expensive. Let him ask this Unionist Parliament why was that? The government of any country against the will of the governed would always be wasteful, extravagant, and bad. [*Irish cheers.*] If Ireland were self-governed, did they imagine that the cost of the civil administration of the country would be, as it was to-day, double per head of the population in Ireland what it was in England; or that Ireland, if self-governed, would find it necessary to spend a million and a half of money a year on maintaining an armed police force about half the size of the regular army of the United States of America? If Ireland were self-governed, did they imagine that it would be considered desirable or necessary to pay the Lord Lieutenant or Governor General of Ireland a salary of £20,000 a year—just double what the President of the United States received? When it was proved that Ireland was paying three millions a year in taxation more than her fair proportion, was it not monstrous to say, "Oh, it is true you are far poorer than we are; that your population is diminishing, your industries are dead or dying, your general prosperity decaying. It is true you pay more taxation than we do, but you have no grievance, because, in return, we maintain against your will a system of government in your country which is ridiculously extravagant, wasteful, and bad." [*Irish cheers.*] But he wished to be allowed to look at the question not from the narrow point of view from which he had been looking at it, but from a wider point of view. If Ireland were really part of the United Kingdom what possible distinction could they make between Imperial and local expenditure? He submitted that they could make none. In the Treaty of Union it was expressly and clearly laid down that all expenditure, including civil government in Ireland as well as the Army and Navy should be common or Imperial. The words in the Treaty of Union were that the revenue so raised should be applied indiscriminately to the services of the United Kingdom. He would not delay the House by emphasising the point made by the Mover of the Resolution that that was the clear intention of the framers of the Act of Union, as well as it was the clear legal interpretation. But he might be permitted to point to one interesting statement made by Lord Castlereagh on this point. He said:—

> "If the proportion of expenditure shall be rightly fixed and ascertained on just principles for every part of the Empire, it is immaterial to Great Britain where the expenditure takes place. If the internal circumstances of Ireland call for a larger proportion of the Army in that island the expense will be greatest there; if the southern coast of England requires to be strengthened, the expenditure will be directed to that quarter. But can Scotland, or any other part of the Empire which equally contributes but do not require any expensive protection, feel any umbrage or jealousy that their state of security requires a smaller proportion of troops and expenditure than more exposed or convulsed parts of the island?"

The principle was here clearly laid down by Lord Castlereagh that the expenditure should be regarded as common or Imperial expenditure. In face of these and other facts, what did the Unionist Government of this Unionist Parliament propose to do? As he understood, they proposed to shelve the question for an indefinite time. In his opinion the proposal for a new Commission was a dishonest evasion of the question, and, if he might say so without disrespect, a shameful evasion of their proper responsibility by the Government. The matter concerned Unionists quite as much as Nationalists. Here they had exposed to the world the shameful fact that for 40 years and more poor depopulated Ireland, with her resources undeveloped, her few remaining industries languishing, her education stunted, and the shadow of famine standing perennially by the cabin door of large masses of her people—for 40 years and more she had been paying three millions sterling a year more than her fair proportion in taxation when compared to this great thriving and prosperous land. The Unionists might appoint a new Commission and pack it if they liked, so that in the result some verdict might be found in opposition to the verdict of the recent Commission. He, at any rate, as a Nationalist, would have this consolation—that by their action they would have torn to shreds the last rag of argument in favour of the maintenance of the Union, and they would have hastened the day when Ireland would find in a national Government of her own, not only political freedom, but her best safeguard against further spoliation. [*Cheers.*]

*Mr. T. P. WHITTAKER (York, W.R., Spen Valley) moved, as an Amendment, to leave out from the word "House" to the end of the Question, in order to add instead thereof the words:—

> "so long as the Exchequers of Great Britain and Ireland remain consolidated all portions of the United Kingdom must be regarded as forming one country for fiscal purposes, and if any genuine and tangible grievance does exist, it can only be satisfactorily removed by so adjusting the present fiscal system as to render it just and equitable to all persons in whatever part of the United Kingdom they may reside."

He emphasised the fact that, according to the terms of reference, the Commission which had recently reported was appointed to ascertain what Ireland ought to contribute to the Imperial expenditure in case she were given Home Rule, and thereby created a financial entity. It was vitally important to bear that point in mind. [*Ministerial cheers.*] They must not, however, apply the results arrived at in the course of that inquiry to the conditions which exist to-day, and which must exist until Home Rule be granted. For the purposes of his argument he was not disposed to dispute the conclusions of the Commission or accept them as absolutely accurate. It was possible there were some factors that had been overlooked. He thought, for one, there was no valuation of the tenant right of Ireland, which, in his judgment, was a most important omission. ["Hear, hear!"] Other figures were largely estimates and guesses. Nevertheless that inquiry was made by extremely competent and able men, and their conclusions on matters of fact must carry the greatest possible weight. But when they came to matters of opinion and policy, based on those facts, they must act upon their own judgment and form their own conclusions. It was on the results of this inquiry that the claim for relief was based, but the conditions would work out similarly in any given part of the United Kingdom. The point of paramount importance was this: under the conditions which now existed must Ireland be considered, could Ireland be regarded and be treated as a separate entity for fiscal purposes? Obviously if she got Home Rule she must be a financial entity; but short of Home Rule should she be so treated? He ventured to think not. He would refer to the Report signed by Lord Farrer, Lord Welby, and Mr. Bertram Currie, in which they quoted some very appropriate arguments used by Sir Stafford Northcote and Mr. Lowe in 1875. Mr. Lowe said—

> "They spoke of the taxation paid by England, by Scotland, and by Ireland, whereas, of course, taxation was not paid by geographical districts but by individuals. To establish a case it must be shown that the individual Irishman was more heavily taxed than the individual Englishman in similar circumstances, and this proof could not be adduced."

Commenting upon this statement Lords Farrer and Welby and Mr. Currie said:

> "The point thus raised is of primary importance to our Inquiry. If it be true that Ireland and Great Britain must be regarded as only one country for purposes of taxation and expenditure, the arguments of Sir S. Northcote and Mr. Lowe are unanswerable; all endeavours to determine proportionate charges and proportionate expenditure in the two countries are misplaced and irrelevant; and our labours must resolve themselves, at the outside, into an inquiry whether, bearing in mind the greater proportion of poor to rich in Ireland, our present fiscal system is fair and equitable as between poor and rich in both countries."

The Commissioners proceeded to contend that the principle here stated had been given up because both parties arranged to appoint Commissioners to inquire what taxation would be equitable on the entity basis. Surely in the face of the Home

Rule agitation, in face of the passing through the House of Commons of a Home Rule Bill, the fact that both parties in the State thought it desirable to inquire into the relative taxability of two portions of the United Kingdom was no reason why they should give up their established principle of taxation if they did not adopt the Home Rule upon which that Inquiry was really based. The Commissioners considered, and rightly, that it was their duty, in view of their instructions, to regard the whole question from the point of view of a separate entity, and it was on that view their conclusions were based. But that did not make their conclusions applicable until the theory on which they were based was given effect to. The conditions for which the Inquiry was admittedly preparatory, did not exist. Ireland, unfortunately, had not got Home Rule, and pending that solution of this and many other Irish problems, the contention that Ireland must be treated as a separate entity was untenable. If Ireland were to be treated as a financial entity it must be done completely and not partially. Home Rule would, in his judgment, confer many advantages on Ireland. He believed it would confer far more on Great Britain, but he had never believed that among the advantages to be conferred on Ireland by Home Rule would be a saving in its financial expenditure. Whether it would or not, Ireland could not now have the advantages of being an entity without also taking the disadvantages. If she were to be an entity for taxation she must be an entity for expenditure on herself within her own borders out of that taxation. Taxation as an entity, without responsibility for expenditure on and in the entity would be a development of the game of "Heads I win, tails you lose," at which England would decline to play. Taxation by entity involved and required provision by the entity for the expenditure of the entity; and also a contribution to the Imperial Exchequer in proportion to the capacity of the entity. That meant some form of Home Rule, and such a financial arrangement was not possible or desirable without it. If the expenditure in and on Ireland and a reasonable contribution to the Imperial Exchequer had been less than the revenue from it, they should have heard a different story and argument. But did the Treaty and Act of Union require that Ireland should be treated as an entity? If the Act of Union required that Ireland should be treated as an entity, then, whether it would be fair, equitable, desirable, or advantageous to Great Britain, was not for their consideration. They would only then be entitled to ask, "Is it a condition of the Union, is it an article of the partnership, and a bond of the contract?" And if it were, he admitted at once they were bound to fulfil it whether it was to their advantage or not. But he contended that the present conditions were strictly in accord with the Act of Union, that they carried out, not only its letter, but its spirit, that they fulfilled the intentions which that Act of Union designed should be arrived at, and that the proposals which were made would practically tear up that portion of the Act of Union. The Act of Union made special provision for that particular consolidation of the revenues of Ireland and Great Britain, which was brought about, and it was one of the conditions of the Act of Union and one of the hopes of its promoters, that that particular consolidation would be sooner or later be brought about. At the very time of the passing of the Act it was admitted it was desirable that there should be indiscriminate taxation, and that the Exchequers should be consolidated; and it was admitted that the only reason why that was not done was because of the inequality of the debts at that time. Lord Castlereagh, speaking in the Irish House of Commons on the 5th February 1800, said:—

> "Were our expenditure common (which would happen if neither kingdom had any separate debts, or if their debts were in proportion to their ability) by no system whatever could they be made to contribute so strictly according to their means, as by being subject to the same taxes equally bearing upon the great objects of taxation in both countries. Such, however, is the disproportion of debts of the two kingdoms to each other at the present time that a common system for the present is impossible."

Mr. Pitt, speaking in the British House of Commons on April 21st 1800, said:—

> "The object of the financial arrangements was to effect the gradual abolition of all distinction in finance and revenue between the two countries, and to accelerate the time when both countries form but one fund and pay one uniform proportion to taxes throughout each."

He submitted, therefore, that this indiscriminate taxation and consolidation of the Exchequers was distinctly contemplated at the time of the passing of the Act of Union. It was also provided that when the time arrived that that condition could be arrived at—

> "it shall no longer be necessary to regulate the contribution of the two countries towards the future expenditure of the United Kingdom according to any of the rules hereinbefore prescribed."

That was a distinct statement that when the consolidation was brought about all these arrangements for treating Ireland as a separate entity and for fixing the proportion of contributions were to be done away with, and forthwith they were to have indiscriminate taxation, which did away with the arrangement for revising the ratio of contributions at any time they wanted, varying from seven to 20 years, because there was to be no ratio, and they were to be taxed equally as part of one kingdom. It was now desired to revive them, but he ventured to say they did not and could not apply to the conditions which now existed. There always had been special exemptions and special abatements for Ireland, and all that she was entitled to was—

> "such particular exemptions or abatements as circumstances might appear from time to time to demand."

It was said the Act of Union was a partnership. It was true, it was a partnership, but it was a partnership, the distinct object of which was to establish a common financial system, and that the two countries should cease to be financial entities as soon as the proportion of the debts rendered complete amalgamation possible. The system of contribution in a fixed proportion was a temporary arrangement to meet special circumstances, and was intended to be abandoned when those special circumstances had disappeared. It was a makeshift arrangement, adopted because the desired and ideal system of identical taxation was not at the moment practicable. The consolidation of the revenues was carried through Parliament in 1816, and took effect on January 5th, 1817. It was a beneficial arrangement for Ireland, it was a necessary one; it was the distinct object of the Union, and it had worked advantageously for her. Consolidation became necessary because Ireland was piling up a debt which threatened her with insolvency, and Great Britain shouldered Ireland's debt to save her from bankruptcy. It was contended that the debt was unfairly piled up by charging Ireland with an excessive proportion of the cost of the great French War. ["Hear, hear!"] Unquestionably the great war hit Ireland heavily. It was a prolonged and costly struggle which could not be foreseen, but national misfortunes like war, famine, and pestilence, and times of great trial and distress did hit nations heavily, and must strike the poor most severely. Ireland was a poor country, but she suffered not more than the poor in England. The middle classes and the well-to-do in Ireland suffered less than anybody in the United Kingdom. Their taxation was lighter than that of the same classes in England, for there were heavy war taxes here and not in Ireland. In 1812 the Poor Rate in England was nearly nine millions; in 1810 there were 15,000 beggars in London streets. Wheat was 122s. a quarter, which was a good thing for the wheat growers, both English and Irish. But for the poor consumers it was a terrible time. The 4lb. loaf was frequently at 1s. 4d., and it touched 1s. 10½d. Was the debt unfairly piled up? He said it was not. The increase was not the result of the Union. It began before, and it would have continued if there had been no Union. In 1793 the debt was £1,917,784; in 1801 it was £28,541,157; and in 1817 £112,684,773. The greater part of the joint expenditure with which Ireland was charged in 1801-17 (£83,000,000 out of £99,000,000) was expended for and in Ireland, and would have been so required and expended if there had been no Union. It was doubtful whether Ireland could have raised that money without the Union, and the improvement which it brought about in the credit of Ireland in Ireland was noteworthy. In 1797-98-99, the Irish Government paid 8 per cent. in Ireland, but in 1800, when the Union was almost settled, she paid 5¾ per cent., while in 1802-15, a time of stress and war, she paid an average of 4¾ per cent., and it once fell below 4 per cent. It was argued that it was because Ireland's contribution was fixed high (1 to 7½) that consolidation became possible. The Mover of this Resolution argued that the debt built up under that ratio of contribution became a lever which was used against the provisions of the Treaty and Acts of Union, to substitute indiscriminate taxation of Ireland for contribution by a quota subject to periodical alteration. But if a lower quota had been fixed the consolidation would have taken place sooner. If the ratio had been 1 to 18 (as suggested) it would have taken place at once, and Ireland would have paid more throughout the war than she did. If the rate had been 1 to 12 the consolidation would have been in five years, and Ireland would have paid vastly more than she did. The burden of the war was terrible, but Great Britain bore more than her share of it. Whether the proportion of 2 to 15 was fair or not it mattered little, because Ireland never paid it. Great Britain paid vastly more than her share. We had, as a nation, treated Ireland very badly in the past in many matters, but in finance during this century our treatment had been marked by the greatest generosity. After the Union, from 1801 to 1817, the total expenditure which Ireland was called upon to meet was £159,700,000, but she did not meet it. The revenue raised by her was £77,800,000, and the balance went to the debt which the United Kingdom shouldered. Thus the controversy as to the proportion of 1 to 7½ was an academic one, because Ireland never paid it. Mr. Childers in his Report said, "The expenditure by Ireland after the Union was to a great extent a nominal or paper transaction." From 1801 to 1817 of the total revenue raised by taxes in the United Kingdom, England raised an average of 92¼ per cent. annually, and Ireland raised an average of 7¾ per cent., or about 1-13th instead of 2-17ths. Between 1801 and 1816 Great Britain raised £264,700,000 by special war taxes which did not apply to Ireland. Then it was said that the increase of taxation during that time was greater in Ireland than in Great Britain. Yes, because they started from a lower basis of taxation, altogether unequal to the responsibility of the nation. In 1815, when Ireland's taxation was at the highest point, she raised not 2-17ths but 2-25ths. Great Britain increased her taxation twelve times as much as Ireland, though 7½ times was the legal requirement. He suggested that the Reports were full of fallacious contentions of this sort. The increase in Great Britain's taxation was vastly greater than that of Ireland. Another complaint was that after the war was over, and expenditure was decreased by one-half, the taxation of Ireland was not decreased, but increased. ["Hear, hear!"] Well, when Great Britain had been enormously taxing herself, not only for her share of the burden, but also for a substantial portion of Ireland's share, when she had paid 264 millions in taxation which Ireland never paid at all, it was not unreasonable that Great Britain should begin to reduce some of that special war taxation to which Ireland had not contributed. His Irish friends wanted to pick and choose; they wanted to insist upon what was convenient to them, and to ignore what was not convenient; but that was absurd and unjust. It was Ireland's interest to keep debts separate in 1801; it was Ireland's interest to amalgamate the debts in 1817; and now, after a long process by which the burden on Ireland had been reduced, Ireland wanted to go back to the old system, and be an entity again; but we could not change it every time it became disadvantageous to us. He had said something of the generosity of Great Britain, and hon. Members had sneered at that. ["Hear, hear!"] They said that Great Britain had not been generous to Ireland. [AN HON. MEMBER: "Certainly not."] He would give a few instances of that generosity. The Treaty of Union provided that when the debts were consolidated, if one portion was larger than the proportion it should be, then the excess should be met by taxes imposed in the country to which it belonged. When the consolidation was made, there was a balance due from Ireland of two millions. Did we ask Ireland to meet that by separate taxation in Ireland? No; we wiped out that debt. From 1806 to 1817 Ireland was seriously in arrears in her contributions to joint expenditure, and these arrears Great Britain made up by her own taxation, or borrowed money at heavy rates of interest at that time. Did we charge Ireland interest on those arrears? No; Ireland was not charged a penny on the money we had to raise to meet her deficiencies. Then, again, the Act of Union provided that when the consolidation of the Exchequers took place, the expenditure of the United Kingdom should be defrayed indiscriminately by equal taxes imposed on the like articles in both countries. We had never used that power to this day completely, and for 30 years we had never approached using it. When the Exchequers were consolidated, Ireland's liability for the year was reduced one-half at a stroke. The expenditure for the year 1816-17 for the United Kingdom was £89,300,000, and of this, according to the Act of Union, Ireland's share was £11,200,000, and that of Great Britain £78,100,000. Did we, this ungenerous country, use our power and compel Ireland to pay £11,200,000, and pay £78,100,000 ourselves? No; instead of paying £78,100,000, we actually paid £83,750,000, and instead of requiring Ireland to pay £11,200,000, we took only £5,560,000. We only took half in the very first year of the consolidation that the article in the Act of Union entitled us to take. ["Hear, hear!"] We never insisted upon our pound of flesh. Mr. Spring Rice, then Secretary to the Treasury, said in 1834 that from 1800 down to that year Great Britain had paid in the aggregate no less a sum than 618 millions in excess of what she would have paid had her taxes been levied at the Irish rates only, and that she had also paid during that time taxes not imposed on Ireland to an aggregate amount of 478 millions. ["Hear, hear!"] Something had been said about liquor taxation, and it should be remembered that the taxes in Ireland on spirits were not equalised to the taxes on spirits in England until 1858. For 41 years Ireland paid less on spirits than England did. For 36 years Ireland paid less than half per gallon what England did, and sometimes less than a third. For 11 years Ireland was exempted from the income tax, from 1842 to 1853. In the five years from 1817 to 1821 immediately after the consummation of the consolidation of the Exchequers, instead of Ireland being taxed equally with England, there were £107,000,000 raised for the joint Exchequer by taxation in Great Britain, for which there was no taxation in Ireland at all. Even so late as 1845 there was taxation in Great Britain which was not in force in Ireland in that year yielding 14½ millions, and to-day there was not equality, though the difference was not great, and Great Britain paid four millions in taxes that were not levied in Ireland. Then Irishmen complained of the cost of police, but the whole of it was borne by the Imperial Exchequer, while in England we paid half the cost of our own police. Look at the post and telegraph system. In Ireland it was a loss to the Imperial Exchequer of £40,000 a year, but in Great Britain it yielded a profit of 3½ millions, which profit went to the benefit of Imperial finance, and was practically a taxation of Great Britain to the extent of 3½ millions, from which taxation Ireland was free. He was entitled to say that Great Britain had been generous to Ireland in matters financial, and had spared Ireland taxation, bearing that taxation herself to the extent of hundreds of millions. She nursed Ireland through a time of terrible distress, and it was a time of terrible stress to Great Britain also. The period from 1817 to 1845 was one of the most trying through which this country ever passed. The library would show in the number of Reports of Royal Commissions what a time of stress and strain it was for agriculture, how manufactures suffered, what a time of financial panic it was, and to what straits the working classes of this country were reduced. The stress and strain was enormous, and yet, rather than do an injustice to Ireland, Great Britain burdened herself with hundreds of millions of taxation, which was not levied in Ireland at all. Ireland had grievances enough—genuine grievances—serious enough without fabricating fictitious ones. He was as anxious as any man that these grievances should be remedied, but let justice be done to England and Scotland. ["Hear, hear!"] The consolidation of revenue was a great boon to Ireland. If it had not taken place, Ireland would have been charged with the interest on the debt which she incurred. Taking that portion of the debt alone, which was expended in and on Ireland, and would have been expended if there had been no Union, the interest would have been three millions a year, and if Ireland had not been united to England she would have had to add to that debt; but if she had never borrowed more, that debt would now stand at three millions a year. Then, if she had paid her contribution to Imperial taxation on the basis of this Report, 1-20th of Imperial expenditure, the amount, excluding debt, would have been £1,850,000. If Ireland had been the entity it was now desired she should be, these amounts, £3,000,000 as interest on debt, and £1,850,000, the contribution to the Imperial Exchequer—making together £4,850,000—would have to be paid before anything would be left for Ireland's home expenditure. Under the Home Rule Bill of 1893, it was estimated that the expenditure of Ireland on her own affairs would be £4,600,000 a year, and Irish Members said it was a low estimate. Add this amount, and the total was £9,450,000 that Ireland would have to pay at the present time if she had charge of her own affairs, and we had not taken over her debt at the time of the consolidation and relieved her of her burden. Irishmen should remember that we took over their debt at the rate of 1 to 7½, and now they wanted to measure their share of it at 1 to 20. If there had been no consolidation, they would have had their portion of the burden to carry, but we took the burden, and now they wanted to share again on the principle favoured by some Socialists who advocated a sharing of all property, and when some exhausted their share would have a redistribution again. We had relieved Ireland of her burden, and could not go back to the principles that obtained before. Many as the advantages of Home Rule would be, financial economy was not one of them. ["Hear, hear!"] The scheme of the Bill of 1893 allowed £4,600,000 for Ireland's internal expenditure, and on the basis of this Report her contribution to Imperial expenditure based on the principle of 1-20th, would be £3,100,000, making altogether £7,700,000, for the same items for which she now pays £6,800,000. Consequently, on the basis of this Commission Report, and the Home Rule Bill of 1893, Ireland would have to pay £900,000 a year more than she pays to-day. The suggestion had been made that Ireland was not concerned in our Imperial expenditure and national defences. He could not subscribe to that, and he would point out that Imperial expenditure depended upon policy, and that Ireland had no reason to complain of the share she had in deciding that policy. ["Hear, hear!"] Her share of Parliamentary representation was far larger than the number of her population or the amount they contributed in taxes warranted. Ireland's taxation to-day was 1-13th of the taxation of the Kingdom, but her representation was 2-13ths, and her contribution to the Imperial expenditure was only 1-32nd. [A NATIONALIST MEMBER: "What; do you say the representation of Ireland ought to be according to the terms of the Act of Union?"] Hon. Members below the Gangway wished to keep strictly to those portions of the Act of Union which suited them, but to depart from those that did not. ["Hear, hear!"] The Report drafted by Mr. Sexton proposed that no contribution should be made by Ireland to Imperial expenditure for a time, and that after that time Ireland should contribute according to the measure of the benefit she derived. That meant that another test was to be added. The contention of the Commissioners was that the ratio of contribution should be according to capacity, but here it was suggested that it should be according to the benefit received. This chopping and changing was not practical, and benefit in itself was not a proper test. Did not English landlords and farmers contribute to the cost of the British Navy, which was used partly to defend the vessels bringing corn to this country; corn, which when landed competed with their own, with the result that the price was lowered? And did not people who had no children contribute largely to the taxation which provided school grants and to School Board rates? It was absurd to say that Ireland had no interest in our Imperial expenditure. Ireland was surely interested in the means taken to defend the populations of our colonies. [A NATIONALIST MEMBER: "No!"] Many Irishmen were in the colonies, and their kinsmen at home would not like to see them under the heel of a foreign invader. In case of war Ireland would be very liable to attack, for an enemy would be very eager to land there—[A NATIONALIST MEMBER: "Hear, hear!"]—in order to harass this country. But a conquering foe would not talk about entities and assessable ratios. He would exact a heavy contribution from Ireland. They had been told that Ireland was but little interested in our trade and commerce, and that the Free Trade policy of this country had injured her. He affirmed, on the contrary, that Ireland had a vital interest in the trade and prosperity of the Kingdom. England was her market, and because England had prospered that market had increased. Ireland had prospered marvellously in comparison with her previous condition. In proof of this he would trouble the House with a few statistics. In 1841, before the adoption of Free Trade, Ireland had 1,800,000 cattle; now she had 4,400,000. She had, in 1841, 2,000,000 sheep; now she had 4,000,000. The corresponding figures for pigs were 1,300,000 and 1,400,000; and for poultry 8,000,000 and 17,000,000. In 1841 the value of cattle, sheep and pigs in Ireland was £14,000,000; in 1871 it was £32,000,000; and in 1896 it was £69,000,000. To-day, therefore, the value was five times as great as it was before Free Trade was instituted. Therefore Ireland had a great interest in the prosperity of this country, because it had vastly increased the market for her produce. Let them consider the exports of cattle from Ireland to this country. In 1847 the exports were 190,000; in 1895 they were 790,000; in the same years the exports of sheep were 324,000 and 652,000 respectively; and the exports of pigs 157,000 and 547,000. [AN HON. MEMBER: "What is the value of the cattle and sheep?"] As he had said, the value was five times as great in 1896 as it was in 1841. It would be said, doubtless, that the price of corn was lower, but so it would have been had protection continued. What was the condition of the countries abroad that had protection? Had they not suffered from competition just as much as we had? In France and Germany the distress of the agricultural population was greater than it was here. Then it was suggested that the manufactures of Ireland had been killed by the operation of Free Trade. That was not the fact. The home-weaving trade had naturally died, owing to the development of machinery, but the manufactures in the factories and mills of Ireland had increased. In 1850 there were 11 woollen and worsted factories in Ireland, employing 625 persons; but in 1890 there were 83, employing 3,463 persons, or five times as many. In 1850 there were 69 linen factories, employing 21,000 persons; and now there were 162, employing 64,000 persons. Then the prices obtained for agricultural produce were vastly greater now than 50 or 60 years ago. Take, for example, the average price of butter. In 1836 the price per cwt. was 69s.; in 1893 it was 95s. The price of potatoes had risen from 1s. 7d. in 1836 to 2s. 9d. in 1893; beef, from 33s. to 44s.; mutton, from 34s. 6d. to 53s.; and pork from 25s. 6d. to 40s. 7d. Agricultural labourers' wages had risen three-fold within the memory of Irish Members now in that House. But the best test of all was to take the average value per head of the population, of the whole crops and stock in the farms. He found that the average value per head of the population of crops and stock, in the period 1851-55 was £15 16s.; and that in the period 1889-93 it was £19; and in this calculation the value of milk, butter and eggs was not included, and their value had increased materially. The value of Ireland's present exports of cattle, pigs and sheep to Great Britain was greater than the value of her total exports of all kinds of goods and produce at the beginning of the century. The amount of money in the Irish banks was five times as much as it was in 1841-45, before Free Trade was adopted. The income tax returns also showed a wonderful growth—even under Schedule A. In 1854 the items assessed under Schedule A amounted to £11,700,000, and in 1894 the same items were assessed at £15,700,000. The total gross assessment of the profits in Ireland rose from £26,390,000 in 1856 to £38,190,000 in 1895, and the net assessment from £21,334,000 to £27,500,000. Irishmen contributed largely to the revenue in proportion to their capacity, mainly (1) because they spent a larger portion of their means on liquor than Englishmen or Scotchmen did; and (2) because they selected a heavily taxed liquor. With a third of the spending capacity of Englishmen they spent three-fourths as much on liquor and tobacco. Ireland had increased her expenditure on these articles during the last thirty-five years; and if the Irish people only smoked and drank now as much as they did in 1862, she would pay £1,300,000 less in taxes. The taxation of liquor was special and peculiar. It was not merely for revenue purposes, but was also deterrent and preventive, and might also fairly be regarded as some compensation for the cost and the burden which the use of that liquor put upon the community in other directions. The hon. Member for Longford spoke of the expenditure on drink and tobacco as a necessary and not a voluntary expenditure, because it could be steadily relied on year by year. They could equally rely on the statistics of crime, but the hon. Member would never on that account argue that criminals should go unpunished because crime was a necessity. Intoxicants were at best a luxury—a dangerous and injurious luxury—and it was too late to say they were a necessity. The people of Ireland, foolishly and extravagantly, spent a larger proportion of their income on liquor than the people of Great Britain did; but that was no reason why liquor should be taxed less. They should cut their coat according to their cloth; they should adapt their drinking to their means, and then they would not be taxed in excess of the people of England or Scotland. Further, the liquor trade and the drinking customs were a source of injury and danger and cost to the community, and it had always been recognised as fair and reasonable that there should be special taxation of liquor. It might be thought that on that matter he was somewhat of a prejudiced witness. But they had the evidence of John Stuart Mill, Professor Sidgwick, and Professor Bastable, Professor of Political Economy in Dublin University—not one of them teetotallers—all of whom justified special taxation on luxuries, and they specially mentioned stimulants as articles on which taxation should be levied. Mr. Dudley Baxter was of opinion that taxation on the heavy consumption of liquor should be regarded as a fine rather than a tax; and he noticed the other day that the right hon. Member for Bodmin described the tax on liquor as a penalty. The policy of Irishmen, when they had a Parliament of their own, was to tax articles of consumption which admittedly pressed most heavily on the poor. Henry Grattan advocated a high duty on spirits and a low duty on beer, and in the Irish House of Commons on February 2, 1791, he moved:—

> "That a principal cause of the excessive use of spirituous liquors is the low price thereof. That to remedy said evil it is necessary to impose such duty or duties on spirituous liquors as render the same too dear for the consumption of the lower orders of the people. That in order to give the lower orders of the people a wholesome and nutritious liquor it is necessary to give the breweries of this kingdom decisive advantages. That for this purpose it is necessary that the duties affecting the brewer should be reduced and the restrictions and regulations whereby he is now restrained taken off."

The reason why the duty on beer in this country was proportionately lower than on spirits was because it was the opinion 70 years ago that if they provided what they called wholesome, nutritious beer, they would wean the people from spirits; and the duty on beer was now only one-third of what it was at the beginning of the century. The idea, however, was an exploded delusion, and he was not sure that anybody believed in it except the hon. Member for Northampton. If the taxation on spirts were a grievance at all, it was an individual grievance. It pressed on spirit drinkers wherever they were found, and whatever their nationality. If there was an injustice, and a remedy was called for, it must be applied to those who suffered—the whisky drinkers. But no one suggested that the relief should take that form. That was very significant. He did not admit that the heavy tax on liquor was a grievance, but there might be a grievance in not taxing all kinds of intoxicants equally, and he would be the last man to place any obstacle in the way of increasing the taxation on beer. If they doubled the taxation on beer and abolished the taxation on tobacco, the poor people of these countries would not pay a halfpenny more taxation, and Ireland would get relief to the tune of £600,000. He for one would vote for that proposal with pleasure. But if the extra tax limited consumption, glad as he should be personally, he was not sure that they would accomplish what they were aiming at in the way of giving relief to Ireland. Equality between entities would not secure equality between individuals in those entities. Indiscriminate taxation did not secure absolute individual equality, nor was it true that any system of taxation in vogue in any country did bring about absolute, or anything approaching absolute, equality of the taxation of individuals. How was this problem to be grappled with, and what were the suggestions of the Commissioners? After reading through their Reports, he ventured to say that the suggestions they made in the way of remedies were miserably disappointing. Few of the Commissioners dare face the issue, and those who did screw up their courage to face it did not grapple with it successfully. He ventured to say that to name the suggested remedies of the Commissioners was to reject them and to indicate the flimsy basis on which the grievances which were alleged to exist rested. [*Ministerial cheers and Nationalist cries of* "Oh!"] That Ireland should be relieved of £2,500,000 a year would not bear examination. It meant that she would not pay a single penny to the National Debt, to the Army or Navy, or even to the defence of Ireland itself; and it meant, in addition, that they should pay a subsidy to her to enable her to carry on her own government within her own borders. [*Ministerial cheers.*] With all respect, he said that such proposals were preposterous. The doles and subsidy policy illustrated the fallacy of the entity theory. The allegation was that it was the poor who were over-taxed and the well-to-do undertaxed. The policy of doles and subsidy would benefit and relieve those who were under-taxed to day, but what would it do for the poor man who was spending more than he ought to do on whisky? This policy meant that the poor of England and Scotland were to be additionally taxed in order that the well-to-do in Ireland might be relieved. He claimed that no case had been made out for special and separate treatment of Ireland. [*Ministerial cheers.*] If Ireland was unfairly treated it was only because individual members of the community were unfairly taxed, and they were only taxed precisely the same as men of similar income and similar habits in England, Scotland and Wales were taxed. Therefore, if there was any injustice on that ground in Ireland, there was a similar injustice in England, Scotland and Wales, and it could only be remedied by rectifying and amending the taxation on the mass of the people in each of the three countries. This was not an Irish question, but it was a question for the whole of the United Kingdom. [*Ministerial cheers.*] It was not a question which concerned men according to their nationality, but according to their resources and their income and their habits. If Ireland was unjustly taxed she could have that grievance rectified by taxing everybody according to their income and their habits, in whatever part of the United Kingdom they lived. If that was possible and desirable in Ireland, it was possible and desirable throughout the United Kingdom; and if it was not possible in the one it was not possible in the other. There must be equity in the taxation of the individual, if there was to be real equity. If they rectified the inequalities of individual taxation, wherever it was desirable and possible, the inequalities of national taxation would be by that very process rectified automatically, so to speak. This was not a question of treaty or of Act of Union. [*Nationalist laughter.*] It was a question of common justice. [*Ministerial cheers.*] It was not a question of nationalities or of entities, but of persons. It was not a question of abstractions and geographical areas; it was a question of human beings and of adjustment between individuals. ["Hear, hear!"] The hon. Member concluded by moving his Amendment.

On the return of Mr. SPEAKER, after the usual interval,

COLONEL WARING (Down, N.) said his rising to second the Amendment would occasion some surprise among the Irish Members on both sides; but, while there was a great deal in the speech of the hon. Member with which he disagreed, he entirely agreed with the Amendment, with the exception that he would substitute "are now" consolidated instead of "remain." He seconded the Amendment as an Imperialist, in the interests of the Empire at large, and in the interest of what he considered justice and honourable dealing. Another strong reason which induced him to second the Amendment was that this was a very complicated and contentious account, and the study he had given to the matter convinced him that when the book came to be made up the balance would be on the wrong page for Ireland. ["Hear, hear!"] He did not pose as a very virtuous person, and he did not say that if he could put his hand into John Bull's pocket and pull out a handful of sovereigns, he would have any great scruple in doing so; but he did not care to do that when the probability was that he would not even get a few shillings. He would not wish it to be supposed that he sympathised with all that had fallen from the hon. Member who moved the Amendment, but for the reasons he had stated he would be very unwilling to see an investigation and a balancing of accounts. It might, perhaps, have sufficed to have voted a simple negative to the proposition of the hon. Member for Longford, but there was something more in the question than the Amendment touched—the most important point of the whole controversy—and that was that all portions of the United Kingdom must be regarded as forming one country for fiscal purposes, and if for fiscal purposes, for all purposes. [" Hear, hear!"] He could not understand the position of any Unionist who could support the principle of regarding Ireland as a separate entity for fiscal purposes, seeing that separation of the Government of Ireland must inevitably follow. [" Hear, hear!"] When the proposition for separate Government for Ireland was made in 1886, it was accompanied by a bribe to the Irish landlords. That bribe they refused to accept. Now they were again offered a paltry bribe, some little contribution for industrial objects, some further squandering of money on useless objects which would do no more good to Ireland than the paper on which the resolution of the hon. Member for Longford was written. Fortunately, in his judgment, Ireland had not got Home Rule, and he held that the Report of this Commission, which had its origin in the Home Rule Bill of 1892, should be committed to oblivion with that Bill. [" Hear, hear!"] It was curiously out of place that hon. Members who had so much abused the Act of Union should now base a large part of their arguments upon its construction. He thought that the proposer of the Amendment had shown that the Act of Union did not justify the conclusions hon. Members opposite had drawn from it. While he he did not accept the proposition of the hon. Member for Longford that Ireland had been so much wronged in the past, he did think there was one matter in which Ireland did not receive that equal treatment to which she was entitled. Last year a very important Bill was passed and a large sum of money was voted to assist local taxation on agricultural incomes. That amounted to 10s. in the pound on agricultural rates in England. In that matter Ireland ought to have been treated as one to England, and ought to have received 10s. in the pound on agricultural rates instead of being put off with 2½d., a sum so contemptible that it had to be put by until someone would be good enough to take it from the Government. [" Hear, hear!"] He contended that the proposer of the Amendment had brought forward weighty and unanswerable reasons for its acceptance, and he agreed that it was the proper way of meeting the proposition of the hon. Member for Longford. With the exception of the grievance he had just mentioned, he did not think that Ireland had at present any substantial grievance to justify this question being raised in the House of Commons. He begged to second the Amendment.

*SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Kerry, W.) confessed that it caused him considerable surprise to see the hon. Member in the position he occupied that night, because he could not understand how any Irishman, and especially an Irish landlord, could set himself in opposition to the claims of the Irish people for the redress of their grievances. The interests of Irish landlords and Irish tenants were identical in this matter. [" Hear, hear!"] The pressure of taxation in Ireland affected the landlords every bit as much as it affected the tenants, but, if he might use a homely phrase, any stick was good enough to beat a dog with, and inasmuch as this Amendment was possibly to some extent in opposition to Home Rule, the hon. and gallant Member saw his way to support it. The hon. Member who moved the Amendment, in a speech of great ability—["hear, hear!"]—brought forward an elaborate array of figures in support of his contention, but the burden of his speech was that the objection to the claim of Ireland was that that claim was based on the supposition that Ireland was a separate entity. He could not understand how anybody could hold that the Irish people were anything but a separate entity. This separate national entity of Ireland had been expresssly recognised in almost every Act of financial legislation which had occupied the attention of that House from 1800 to at all events 1860. Every Session of Parliament they had separate legislation for Ireland on every subject imaginable. If they could have separate legislation for Ireland on every subject except finance, moreover, why could they not also have separate legislation in regard to financial matters? The hon. Member had stated that in recent years the number and value of live stock had increased in Ireland. It might be true that the number and value of live stock in Ireland had increased, but in the meantime the population had decreased. [*Irish cheers.*] Since 1841 their population had decreased by four millions. They would rather have more people in Ireland than more pigs, and sheep, and cattle. The hon. Member had told them that since 1853 there was a very great increase in the number of factories in Ireland. That might be, but had the hon. Member ever read of the industrial condition of Ireland before 1800? Did he know the number of industries which existed in Ireland before the destruction of the Irish Parliament, or the number of people who were employed in Ireland then? ["Hear, hear!"] If he would devote his undoubted abilities to an investigation in that direction he would probably realise that on the whole the condition of Ireland had not improved from 1800 to 1896, although possibly the deterioration in Ireland might have been somewhat checked from 1853 to 1896. The hon. Member spoke of the great improvement in Ireland since 1853, and forgot, or had not taken into account, the enormous improvement which had taken place in Great Britain in the same period. Ireland might have improved since 1845, though he doubted it. ["Hear, hear!"] But what had been the improvement in England since then? He believed the wealth of England had increased since 1800 something like a thousand fold, and he was perfectly certain that the wealth of Ireland since that period had decreased. In 1800 the capital of Ireland was estimated at 513 millions, but nobody estimated the capital of Ireland at the present moment at more than 400 millions. In "Thom's Directory" he found it estimated as low as 280 millions. The hon. Member stated that the Irish smoked too much. The people of Ireland now paid to the Exchequer something like £1,100,000 for tobacco, and probably the same amount for tobacco which they employed for manufacturing purposes, whereas in 1820 the Irish people grew their own tobacco and manufactured it free of tax. As to their drinking propensities in Ireland, he found, on looking into the drink bill of the two countries, that when an Englishman spent 1s. in drink he got 10d. worth of drink and paid 2d. worth of tax, whereas an Irishman got 2d. worth of drink and paid 10d. worth of tax. [*Laughter.*] That was a homely but an incisive way of putting the matter before the House. The hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh (Colonel Saunderson) seemed to be highly amused by that statement. He did not know whether the hon. and gallant Gentleman drank whisky, but if he did he would know in future that for every glass he consumed he paid 5d. to the Exchequer, and only got 1d. value for his money. [*Laughter.*] Even if all the arguments advanced by the hon. Member who moved the Amendment were well founded, it would not in the least affect the position of the Irish Members, which was that in the matter of taxation Ireland occupied a position relatively to that of England which was neither equitable nor just. The Irish claim had been put forward ably and fully by his hon. Friend the Member for Longford in his extremely powerful speech, and his hon. Friend's arguments were enforced with eloquence by his hon. Friend the Member for Waterford, who also made a valuable contribution to the Debate. But there were one or two matters which had been left unsaid in those speeches of his hon. Friends, and which he would touch upon. They had spoken of the financial condition of Ireland before the Union. He wanted to draw attention to what followed with reference to Irish taxation subsequent to the Act of Union and previous to the consolidation of the two Exchequers. All the speeches made by Lord Castlereagh, Mr. Pitt, and others who spoke in support of the Act of Union, contained the promise that Ireland would never be taxed more than her relative taxable capacity. But after the Act of Union, it was unfortunately true that the liabilities of Ireland and her taxation increased in an enormous degree, so much so that there was absolutely no comparison between the two countries. At the time of the Union, Ireland's National Debt, funded and unfunded, was £28,000,000, and England's National Debt, funded and unfunded, £440,000,000. After sixteen years of Union finance the Irish debt had risen to £112,000,000, and England's debt to

£700,000,000. According to the statement of accounts between Great Britain and Ireland in the period 1801-17, the Revenue receipts of Great Britain were £900,000,000, and those of Ireland £84,000,000. Those were the Treasury returns published in 1824, and with reference to Treasury returns generally, he must express, in parenthesis, his profound conviction that they were, as far as his experience went, absolutely unreliable. The Treasury returns did not, for instance, give credit to Ireland for her payments in respect of tithe rent, quit rent, or Crown rent, payable in England, or for many other taxes paid by Ireland in England. On an examination of figures he held that Ireland did pay her proportion of contribution according to the Act of Union; not only so, but she overpaid her proper proportion by the sum of £6,000,000 during the 16 years to which he had referred. The more one studied the financial position between the years 1800 and 1816 the more one saw the injustice which was done to Ireland. The Irish deficit in 1817, according to the Return (No. 256) of 1824, was £11,700,000. In order to make up that deficit the Irish debt was increased by £80,000,000. This Paper was full of extraordinary revelations as to the treatment of Ireland. On the 15th January 1816, the debts of the two countries appeared distinct for the last time. The debt of Great Britain was put at £688,820,000; and that of Ireland at £107,388,000—a total of £796,000,000. The same Return gave the debt of the two countries in 1817, the following year, as £755,000,000; a diminution of 40 millions, which could not possibly have been effected in one year. But this amount, curiously, was just the amount necessary to bring the Irish deficit up to a level which would allow of the two Exchequers being united. After the Union Mr. Pitt introduced his first Budget. The "Annual Register" of 1801 gave the statistics. Mr. Pitt brought in an elaborate calculation in which every item was divided in the proportions of 15-17ths to Great Britain and 2-17ths to Ireland. In that particular Mr. Pitt acted the part of an honest man. According to Mr. Pitt the total supplies for the year were £35,587,462, and the Irish contribution at 2-17ths was £4,186,760. The permanent charges of the Civil List and other charges not related to the Public Debt amounted to £1,170,000, and Ireland's share was put at £137,000. Then Mr. Pitt went on to declare that whatever else remained with the exception of the National Debt of Ireland was to be provided by Great Britain. But a few days later the Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Corry, brought in his Budget, and charged Ireland with £2,000,000 more than Mr. Pitt had done. He correctly stated Ireland's share of the war expenditure, 2-17ths. But Civil expenses were put at £600,000, as compared with £137,000 charged by Mr. Pitt. Next Ireland was over-charged £500,000 for interest on that Irish debt; £622,000 for the purchase money of Irish boroughs, though that expenditure was covered at the Act of Union by a charge of £1,500,000 on the Irish National Debt; £230,000 was added as compensation for the loyalists in respect of the revolution of 1798, though they had already been compensated to the tune of £1,500,000 charged on the Irish National Debt; £100,000 was added for inland navigation; and £70,000 was charged for the Irish army resident in England, although the English army resident in Ireland was being paid for out of the Irish Exchequer. Altogether £2,000,000 were added to Mr. Pitt's figures. Then Mr. Corry proposed a loan of £2,500,000 to meet his manufactured deficit, and issued stock to the amount of £4,500,000 on this pretext. This showed how the finances of Ireland were brought to the point at which amalgamation with England became possible. Of course, this Amendment would be defeated, and the Government would refuse to listen to the demand of the Irish people for the redress of the national grievances. But he could promise the Government that this would not be the last word said on the question. [*Cheers.*] Irishmen knew that they had right on their side. This subject had been taken up in Ireland, and there they intended to pursue it. If the House did not deal with the grievances of Ireland there would be an agitation in Ireland which would give the Government more trouble than all the agitations that had gone before, because there were men joined in it who were never in political harmony before. Ireland was over-taxed. In England eleven millions was paid in remission of local rates, but Ireland was given a beggarly £250,000. In England they passed an Agricultural Rating Bill and refused to extend its benefits to Ireland. All these points would be seized upon by the Irish people.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir MICHAEL HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): Whatever opinions we may hold on this important subject, I am sure that all of us who have listened to the speeches of the hon. Member for Longford and the hon. Member for Spen Valley will agree that we have had able and exhaustive statements of two very different sides of it. I have no intention whatever of attempting to rival those two hon. Members in the length at which they have addressed the House. Not that I blame them for that length. By no means, for it is necessary that this subject should be fully placed before Parliament. But it is unnecessary for me to go again over ground already trodden. But, widely as those two speeches differed, I confess there was something in the speeches of the Mover and Seconder of the Motion that made me feel even more how difficult it is for those who live on the two sides of St. George's Channel to approach this matter from anything like a common point of view. [*Cheers.*] The hon. Member for Longford and the hon. Member for Waterford attributed in so many words everything that was wrong in Ireland or had been wrong during the last century to Great Britain. [*Nationalist cheers and Ministerial laughter, and* Mr. MACNEILL: "Perfectly right."] Great Britain instigated the Irish rebellion of 1798; Great Britain ruined Ireland by the provisions of the Act of Union; Great Britain was responsible for the Irish famine. [Mr. MACNEILL: "It was," *and laughter.*] Great Britain is responsible for the fact that the population of Ireland now is half-a-million less than it was at the time of the Union. [*Nationalist cheers.*] Great Britain is responsible for the fact that Ireland has unfortunately no mineral resources. [AN IRISH MEMBER: "Your competition closed them up."] Because that is the secret of the vast industrial prosperity of Great Britain as compared with Ireland. Great Britain is responsible, I gather, for the increase of rates in Ireland; Great Britain is responsible for the Exchequer expenditure for local purposes in Ireland —[AN HON. MEMBER: "The east wind," *and laughter*]—because she fixes the scale and moulds it according to her will. During all this century, Irishmen, of course, have had no representatives in the Imperial Parliament, and those representatives have never by any chance had their way in matters relating to Ireland. [*Nationalist cheers.*] Now, I think it will be admitted that, that being the view of hon. Members from Ireland who sit on the opposite Benches, it is a mere waste of time for me, an unfortunate person living on this side of St. George's Channel, to argue in the hope of convincing them to the contrary. But this, at any rate, I can say—that it is my sincere desire in the responsible position which I hold, to approach this question of the financial relations between Ireland and Great Britain in the most impartial spirit and to endeavour to do justice to both sides. [*Cheers.*] I will not follow the hon Member for Longford in his historical retrospect. I am quite prepared to admit that, as events shaped themselves, the burden imposed upon Ireland by the proportionate contribution which was required of her by the Act of Union, was more than she could bear. I think that if the years that followed the Union had been years of peace instead of war, a very different result might have occurred. But as a matter of fact, as the hon. Member for Spen Valley has pointed out to the House, Ireland never did bear that burden. She was relieved of it by the arrangement of 1817, when the debts and the Exchequers were consolidated, and the whole of the United Kingdom became responsible for the Irish debt. Well, Sir, that arrangement has been objected to by the hon. Member for Longford. All I can say is, that the Bill sanctioning it passed the House of Commons in ten days with 103 Irish representatives sitting in the House, and passed with practical unanimity, because it was known to be a great relief to Ireland. [*Cheers.*] And, further, when the circumstances of 1816-17 were inquired into by a Committee of this House in 1864, that Committee—composed, as it was, of a majority of Irish Members—reported that the Imperial Parliament was justified in consolidating the debts and amalgamating the Exchequers of the two countries. At any rate, nobody wants to go back to the provisions that existed before 1817. So far as I can gather, no real complaint has been made of anything that occurred between 1817 and 1853. Complaint has been made, and I dare say with justice, of the increase of Irish taxation between 1853 and 1860. But it is a matter which is now mainly of historical interest to the followers of Mr. Gladstone, who must, I fear, be somewhat shocked by the way in which such devotees as Lord Farrer and Lord Welby have turned against their old political chief. [*Laughter.*] What we have to deal with to-day is not a matter of historical retrospect—not the many interesting circumstances which, from very different points of view, have been detailed to the House to-night in regard to the past, but the present position of affairs. Is there now any substantial grievance in financial matters on the side of Ireland as against Great Britain, and, if so, how should that grievance be remedied? The hon. Member for Longford bases his Motion on the opinion of 11 members of the late Royal Commission that, whilst the actual tax revenue of Ireland is about one-eleventh of Great Britain (it has since decreased to one-twelfth), the relative taxable capacity is very much smaller, and is not reckoned by any of them as exceeding one-twentieth. On that statement he asks the House to affirm that there is "an undue burden on Ireland which constitutes a great grievance to all classes of the Irish community," and he carefully explained that, so far as the well-to-do classes were concerned, it was in the nature of a moral and intellectual grievance. [*Laughter.*] I would just venture to observe in passing that the Royal Commission do not say what the hon. Member asks the House to affirm. They do not say that their statement constitutes a grievance to Ireland. Why? They could not have said so, because out of the Royal Commissioners who signed that statement, three—and these by no means the least important—held that expenditure might, at any rate in some measure, be taken as a set-off against taxation. But that is the view of the hon. Member, and he asks us for early remedial legislation. What remedial legislation? I have listened to the hon. Member's speech from beginning to end, and I failed to discover. He complained of over-taxation. What over-taxation? Surely some tax must pinch. The whole theory is that unfortunate Britons know nothing of the needs of Ireland. He represents a majority of the representatives of the Irish people. Cannot he tell us what tax constitutes the grievance? Cannot he tell us where he wishes taxation to be reduced or abolished? No; he is dumb. [*Cheers and* A Voice: "He spoke for two hours!"] Yes, he spoke for two hours, but on this important subject he was absolutely dumb. He cannot say whether he desires this alleged grievance to be remedied by the remission or reduction of taxation, or in any other way. And why? Because the whole burden of his speech was this, that the circumstances of the two countries are so different that they cannot properly be subjected to the same system of taxation or of government, and that in his view and in the view of his colleagues, and of the right hon. Gentlemen on the Front Opposition Bench, the only remedy is Home Rule. [*A laugh.*] I did not hear a very loud cheer in support of that view from the opposite side of the House, because I think they must have had in their minds the painful picture of the condition of Ireland which was painted by the hon. Member for Longford. What did he say to us? A more painful picture was never drawn. He spoke of the enormous increase of population in Great Britain, and the decrease of population in Ireland; he told us how, even in agricutural matters, Ireland being an agricultural country, the agricultural produce per head of the population in Britain was double that achieved in Ireland; he told us, I think, that the value of the agricultural produce in Ireland was hardly worth reckoning at all, that the people were too poor to consume it themselves, and had to send it abroad; he told us that the margin of Irish income above the bare necessities of existence did not materially exceed the amount lost by the economic drain and by taxation. The hon. Member for Waterford told us that the shadow of famine was permanently standing by the door of the cabins of Ireland—[*cheers*]—and, as Mr. Sexton said in his Report, Ireland was crippled in the struggle for mere existence by the taxation which was imposed on her. Sir, I think I could draw a different picture, gathered perhaps from the reports of increasing deposits in all kinds of banks—[*ironical laughter*]—of rising wages, of enormous prices for tenant-right—[*Ministerial cheers*]—of increased exports of Irish manufactures, and other evidences of material prosperity, less, I admit, than the prosperity of Great Britain, but still prosperity. ["Hear, hear!"] But suppose the picture drawn is a true one. What then? Does it not show conclusively that Home Rule would mean financial ruin to Ireland—[*derisive laughter from the Nationalists*]—unless, which I hope is impossible, she was reduced to the position of a mere dependency of Great Britain, contributing nothing to the common expenditure or to her own defence, without representation in this House, and without any power of controlling the destinies of the Empire. [*Cheers.*] I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Montrose will take a very sanguine view of the possibilities of Home Rule as a remedy for this grievance. He told us some little time ago that he did not think much political capital could be made out of this question. ["Hear, hear!" *from* Mr. J. MORLEY.] He is responsible for the appointment of this Royal Commission. The Royal Commission was appointed not as previous inquiries have been appointed, to investigate grievances that were alleged in regard to Irish taxation on the basis of our existing financial system. No; but to discover an entirely new financial system which should be part of a scheme of Home Rule.

MR. J. MORLEY (Montrose Burghs): May I remind the right hon. Gentleman that in substance the terms of reference to the Commission appointed by our Government was the same as those of the Committee proposed to be appointed by the right hon. Gentleman beside him?

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: As the right hon. Gentleman has questioned my statement, I am afraid I shall have to detain the House while I give the history of the appointment of this Commission. In 1886 Mr. Gladstone proposed, as we all remember, a Home Rule Bill. In that Bill were contained certain provisions with regard to the future contribution of Ireland under Home Rule to the common expenditure of the United Kingdom. Those provisions were characterised by Mr. Gladstone as equitable and even generous. They were not thought so by the Irish representatives of the day, and, as the Bill was rejected on Second Reading, they were never practically discussed in Parliament. In 1893 Mr. Gladstone made other and different proposals for the same object, which had to be withdrawn on account of erroneous statistics. Then came a third set of proposals of a temporary character to last for only six years, and those proposals passed through the House of Commons because of their temporary character. The only condition on which they were allowed to pass either by Irish or Unionist representatives was because the Government undertook to appoint a Committee to inquire into the true revenue of Ireland. The inquiry of that Committee was extended, on the instigation of Mr. Sexton, to the principle and mode of equitably determining the relative capacity of Ireland to contribute to Imperial charges, and how the amount of such annual contributions should be fixed. That is the origin of the reference to the Royal Commission, and not the Committee of my right hon. Friend. [*Cheers.*] And, Sir, when the matter was discussed in the House of Commons, the right hon. Member for Wolverhampton, representing the Government of the day, said that, having regard to the controversy raging round the question of how much the Irish contribution to Imperial expenditure should be,

> "it is fair to both countries that the subject should be investigated independently by a Royal Commission, and this was the justification of the Government for the purely temporary way in which the matter had been dealt with in the Bill."

[*Cheers.*] What is the outcome of this? The question, and a most vital question to any settlement of Home Rule—what should be the contribution of Ireland to the common expenditure of the United Kingdom?—which Mr. Gladstone, with all his financial genius, had three times failed to settle, was referred to the late Royal Commission. [*Cheers.*] The late Royal Commission absolutely declined to report upon the subject. [*Cheers.*] They deliberately left that question unsolved, and, as they have themselves admitted, the Report, truncated and maimed as it is, obviously deals with but a small part of the inquiry intrusted to them. [*Cheers.*] What is the result? Here we have a financial question brought before us to-night which, in the opinion of the Home Rule Party and of right hon. Gentlemen on the opposite Bench, can only be satisfactorily settled by Home Rule. [*Cheers.*] It is admitted that the settlement of part of that financial question, the contribution of Ireland to the common expenditure under the system of Home Rule, on fair terms, acceptable to both sides, is an essential preliminary to any Home Rule scheme: here we have a Commission specially appointed to settle that very question, and that Commission can arrive at no conclusion whatever with regard to it. [*Cheers.*] I wonder whether the right hon. Gentleman does not congratulate himself from the very bottom of his heart that it is likely to be some years to come before he has to propose a Home Rule Bill to the House of Commons. [*Laughter and cheers.*] But I would say something further. This Commission has disclosed on this very subject a difference of opinion which may be a fatal obstacle to the policy of the right hon. Gentleman. Hitherto in all the Home Rule Debates it was always admitted that there should be a substantial and real contribution from Ireland under Home Rule to the common expenditure of the United Kingdom. That was admitted even by Mr. Sexton; it was admitted to the full by the hon. Member for Mayo—whom I do not see in his place to-night—who said in so many words, "Ascertain the fair taxable capacity of Ireland, and fix her contribution to the Imperial expenditure on that taxable capacity." Very well. Now we have a very different state of things. The right hon. Member for Fife, Lord Spencer the other day in the House of Lords, and I fancy all those who sit on the opposite Bench, will and must adhere to this principle of a fair contribution from Ireland under a Home Rule Bill to the expenditure of the United Kingdom. That is now repudiated. [*Opposition cries of* "No!"] It was repudiated tonight by the hon. Member for Longford on behalf of the Party whom he represented. [*Cheers.*] It was repudiated in the Report which he signed in concert with Mr. Sexton. [*Cheers.*] It is repudiated by Lord Farrer, who agrees with them in saying that for an indefinite period Ireland should pay no Imperial contribution at all. Why? Lord Farrer says on the ground of the poverty of Ireland, on the ground of the past over-taxation of Ireland. [*Nationalist cheers.*] That is not the view of the hon. Member for Longford. He told us to-night very plainly what his view was, and I will quote it from the Report which he signed together with Mr. Sexton. His opinion is, and that I take to be the opinion of the section of the Irish Party which he represents, that all this expenditure on the Army, the Navy, and the debt, represents the cost of securing and extending British possessions, trade, and commerce, obtaining British income, and protecting British wealth; and does not represent any corresponding advantage in the case of Ireland, and causes no augmentation of her resources. [*Irish cheers.*] And, therefore, Ireland is to retain her share in the Government of the Empire and pay nothing for it. [*Ministerial cheers.*] I wish the right hon. Gentleman joy in the preparation of his next Home Rule Bill. [*Ministerial cheers and laughter.*] I have, so far, dealt with the opinion of the hon. Member for Longford—and those who agree with him—that this matter can only be settled by Home Rule. I think I have shown some little difficulty in the way of that settlement. But he appeals to us to-night as a Unionist Government, and he says:—

> "You will do nothing towards Home Rule; in order to keep off Home Rule you are, therefore, bound to meet this demand in some other way."

That, I think, is his argument. Well, Sir, I will tell him, as a Unionist Government, we will do nothing to meet his demand which will tend to a separate system of finance between Great Britain and Ireland, any more than we will move in the direction of a separate political system for Ireland. [*Ministerial cheers.*] We believe that the arrangement which has existed since 1817 of a consolidated debt, of a common exchequer, of equal taxes levied on the same articles in both countries, is in principle far more equitable as between individuals, as between classes, aye, and even as between countries, than any system based on taxable capacity which is, as we have seen in this Blue-book, a matter of the wildest speculation—[*cheers*]—or any system of contribution according to specific proportions which is absolutely negatived for the future, after the consolidation of the Exchequers, by the provisions of the Act of Union, which was tried and failed so disastrously in the early years of this century, and which, to my mind at any rate, could never be successful, having in view the constantly varying circumstances of the three parts of the United Kingdom. [*Cheers.*] That is the principle on which we stand. Common taxation is part of the Union—["hear, hear!"]—and I would no more be a party to even such a Measure as that wonderful suggestion of Lord Welby, borrowed from the great example of the Isle of Man, that there should be a fixed contribution from Ireland towards Imperial expenditure, and that the remaining taxation of Ireland should be left to a Committee of this House, composed mainly of Irish Members, to distribute—a proposition which to my mind would be a direct step in the direction of Home Rule—than I would be a party to Home Rule itself. I am convinced, however mischievous, however fatal to the interests of the United Kingdom political Home Rule might be, financial Home Rule would be just as mischievous and as fatal. ["Hear, hear!"] That is the position on which we take our stand—on the arrangements that were sanctioned unanimously by the Imperial Parliament according to the provisions of the Act of Union, and in perfect fairness to Ireland. ["No, no!" *and cheers.*] I entirely admit that with that arrangement was coupled a proviso which has now become celebrated—that indiscriminate contribution should be subject to such particular exemptions and abatements in Ireland and Scotland as circumstances might appear from time to time to demand. I do not think it is very easy to know precisely what was meant by statesmen nearly 100 years ago when they framed those words. I am quite sure it is very difficult to know how they would have applied them to the circumstances of the present day, and for this reason we propose this matter as one of the subjects of inquiry we contemplate. We wish it to be impartially, I would even say judicially, investigated.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): Judicially?

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Well, I hope that on the forthcoming Royal Commission we may obtain the services of some Judges from England, Scotland, and Ireland. [*Ironical laughter.*] I do not quite understand the object of that interruption. Here is a matter which is surely of difficult interpretation. It is the interpretation of great statutes, of an Act of Union between the three kingdoms, which ought to be interpreted by the most impartial tribunal you can obtain.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Are the Judges to sit by themselves? [*Cries of* "Order!"]

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: As members of the Royal Commission. I am merely putting forward the view I myself entertain. Nothing is settled yet as to the composition of the Commission, because it has been postponed at the wish of hon. Members opposite, until the subject had been debated; but I put forward my view as to a matter which should at least be considered in forming the Commission. This proviso is by no means easy of interpretation, and I will endeavour to explain why. The circumstances, both in the matter of Exchequer expenditure and of taxation, have entirely changed since it was enacted. Exchequer expenditure was then mainly confined to the Army, Navy, and National Debt—the cost of civil government was very small as compared with those services. But in our day Exchequer expenditure for civil government has been enormously swelled by charges for education, police, and prisons, for inspection, for poor law and sanitary purposes, and for all the multifarious needs of our modern civilisation, which, 100 years ago were hardly included in it at all. Again, with regard to taxation, the whole system is changed. Of course it has been said that we have all the information we require in the proceedings of the late Royal Commission. That is not so, because the late Royal Commission approached this matter from an entirely different point of view. They were obliged to do so by their order of reference. We approach it from the Unionist point of view. They were directed to approach it from the Home Rule point of view; and, as the hon. Member for Spen Valley has stated, you must consider this subject from those two different points of view in a totally different way. But does the Report of the Royal Commission even express their opinion on this subject? They say in the first place, that "identity of taxation does not necessarily involve equality of burden." That is a very wise axiom; but they do not proceed to show how it is applicable to the circumstances of the present day, or whether it is applicable at all. They say that "the increase of taxation laid on Ireland between 1853 and 1860 was not justified by the then existing circumstances;" but they do not say that increase of taxation ought now to be repealed, any more than did the hon. Members from Ireland who spoke this evening. They did not deal with anything beyond the narrow scope of this joint Report, signed by different persons holding so many different views. Well, obviously there can be no desire to repeal the taxation proposed in 1853. No witness before the Royal Commission suggested the repeal of the income-tax in Ireland, and no person of authority has suggested its repeal. There is no grievance on the subject of direct taxation at all. Why? Because, as some of the Commissioners discovered, while by the taxable capacity of Ireland 1-20th would be her share of direct taxation, the proportion paid is only 1-23rd. ["Hear, hear!"] I can conceive that Great Britain might have something to say on the subject of direct taxation if that is to be considered not as between individuals, in which case it is fair enough as it stands, but as between countries. Now, take our system of death duties. We have a system of death duties heavily graduated against larger properties and under which the smallest properties are entirely exempt. Is it not obvious that under such a system the country in which the largest proportion of rich men die may, through the system of graduation, pay a great deal more to the death duties in proportion to the total amount of property assessed to the death duties than is paid in the country where there is a small number of rich men? ["Hear, hear!"] Take Schedule A of the Income tax. You have landed property in Great Britain assessed on the total rental, which in Great Britain belongs to the landlord, but the total rental in Ireland is divided between the tenant right and the interest of the landlord, and only the part of it which belongs to the landlord can be assessed, because the income of the tenant will nearly always come below the income tax limit. Again, when a large property is bought by a number of tenant purchasers, the total value of the property remains the same, but while before it was broken up it paid income tax under Schedule A, after it is broken up it will not pay income tax at all. ["Hear, hear!"] Therefore, the total amount assessed to income tax in Ireland may very likely not fairly represent the real wealth of that country as compared with the total amount assessed for income tax in Great Britain. ["Hear, hear!"] I ought to ask pardon for detaining the House upon these points, but they are points that were not investigated at all by the Royal Commission; and if full consideration is to be given to taxable capacity they are points that ought to be considered. Now I come to that part of taxation in regard to which grievances are alleged; it is, of course, indirect taxation. I wish the House first to notice how totally different our system of indirect taxation is in these days to anything that existed in the early part of the century. Of course, the proviso with regard to exemptions and abatements must apply primarily to indirect taxation; that is obvious. In 1816 what was the system of Customs duties in Great Britain and also in Ireland? There were nearly 500 articles in both countries subject to Customs duties, and there were nearly 1,600 different rates of duty on those articles. Everything was taxed—necessaries of life, luxuries—everything. I think the only articles that were free were, oddly enough, bullion, diamonds, turbots, lobsters, and fish of British and Irish catching. [*Laughter.*] Ireland had an advantage in lower Customs duties on the important articles salt, wood, and coals. There were also very large Excise duties in both countries, and Ireland had considerable advantage in those. But the whole system of taxation was a system of levying revenue in every possible way, and on every article that could by any possibility be taxed. Well, compare that with the system of the present day, a system under which indirect taxation is only levied on a very few articles of large consumption producing a very great revenue. What was Lord Castlereagh's intention as to the application of the proviso as to exemptions and abatements? His words have been quoted by the hon. Member for Longford, but I ask no pardon for quoting them again. He said abatements might be made on some out of many articles where a high duty was unproductive or pressed hardly on the poor. Well, nobody can say of the present system of indirect taxation that it is unproductive. Anyone who has studied the returns of revenue for the past few years will see that the revenue has been increasing largely from both direct and indirect taxation. But increases in revenue from direct taxation have been due mainly to an increase in taxes; whereas increases in revenue from indirect taxation have been due, generally speaking, to a greater consumption of the articles taxed. That does not look as if our present system of indirect taxation pressed hardly upon the people. It is elastic, and our system of direct taxation is not. But it is said that this is not the case in Ireland. I have seen a calculation which I fancy is not very far from the truth, that if the principal articles subject to indirect taxation were not consumed more largely per head in Ireland now than they were 35 years ago the taxation in Ireland would be automatically reduced to the extent of £1,300,000. I do not think it will be, and as Chancellor of the Exchequer I cannot say that I particularly desire that it should be. I merely wish to point out that in this automatic growth of revenue from indirect taxation Ireland has taken her share. It is argued that the articles on which our indirect taxation is levied are necessaries of life, and the main grievance turns upon that assertion. For the sake of argument I will eliminate for the present from consideration the article of tea. It is pretty well known that our indirect taxation is mainly derived from the duties on tea, alcohol, and tobacco. I eliminate tea because it is more a necessary of life than the others, and also because, if the whole duty on tea were repealed to-morrow Ireland would only benefit by about half a million a year. The main Irish grievance with regard to indirect taxation arises from the taxation upon alcohol and tobacco. Now it is argued that they are necessaries of life. Why are they necessaries of life to the Irishman more than to the Englishman or Scotchman? I have never heard that question answered. [*Laughter.*] The Highlander, the inhabitant of the Hebrides, has the same Celtic nature; he is surrounded by the same melancholy sea; he lives in the same moist climate as the inhabitant of the west of Ireland. Why does he not want whisky as a necessary of life quite as much as the Irishman? [*Laughter and an* HON. MEMBER: "He does!"] Why is the inhabitant of the slums of Cork or Dublin more subject to the depressing influence of poverty, more in need of stimulants to counteract it, than the equally unhappy inhabitant of the slums of Whitechapel or Bethnal Green? If alcohol be a necessary of life for the one, it is also a necessary of life for the other. ["Hear, hear!"] But is it a necessary of life to either? I will put a case. Mr. Childers occupied an important part of his Report with an argument as to the comparative change in the circumstances of Great Britain and Ireland in the last 50 years. He alluded to the advance of Great Britain in wealth as being much greater than the advance of Ireland. He argued that the policy of free trade had benefited Great Britain as a mainly industrial country, but had rather injured Ireland as a mainly agricultural country, and that view was adopted by the hon. Member for Longford to-night. Mr. Childers went on to suggest that it would benefit Ireland if part of the duties on tea and tobacco were transferred to foreign meat, live stock, and dairy produce. Now, if I were to come down to the House before Easter and propose such a transfer, what would happen in the holidays? [*Laughter.*] Why, the right hon. Member for Montrose and all his colleagues would go to the country and denounce me as proposing a tax on the food of the people and the necessaries of life. ["Hear, hear!"] He and his colleagues have been for years responsible in the past, and I dare say will be responsible again in the future, for duties on tea and tobacco. Does that not prove that there is some difference at any rate between the position of tea and tobacco on the one side, and meat and dairy produce on the other, and that the term "necessaries of life" cannot be applied in the same degree to those two classes of commodities? But I press the matter further. The right hon. Gentleman considers alcohol a necessary of life. [Mr. J. MORLEY: "No!"] Oh yes he does. ["No!" *and laughter.*] Well, I will not put it quite so strongly. He concurred with the right hon. Member for Fife in describing alcohol as much a necessary of life as clothes to a man at the North Pole. [*Laughter.*] That was the comparison of the right hon. Member for Fife. It was a little ridiculed by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House, and, speaking after my right hon. Friend, of course the right hon. Gentleman supported his colleague. [*Laughter.*] I hope he may be able to explain it. [*Laughter.*] Because I am puzzled by the recollection that the right hon. Member and all his colleagues in the late Government were promoters of a certain Bill called the Local Veto Bill—[*laughter*]—the object of which was to allow a majority in a district to prevent a minority of the inhabitants from obtaining the necessaries of life. [*Renewed laughter.*] I know that the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues have characterised argument on this subject as pedantic; but we should be very glad if they would explain themselves and show how these articles which successive Chancellors of the Exchequer of all parties have considered fit subjects for high taxation, which Parliament has always considered fit subjects for high taxation, which hon. Members below the Gangway now consider fit subjects for high taxation—are necessaries of life in the ordinary use of the term. No, Sir, what they are is this—they are articles largely and generally consumed by all classes in this country, the duty on which necessarily falls more heavily on the poorer classes who consume them than on the richer classes who consume them; and the balance is made up by our system of direct taxation. That is the real position. But now, what is the suggestion which I find on the Notice Paper, but which has not been moved, as to the course which we might take with regard to this question? The hon. Member for Longford has not suggested, no one has suggested, the abolition or reduction of existing taxes; but a suggestion has been made by my right hon. Friend the Member for South Dublin, that, having regard to the disproportionate tax revenue contributed by Ireland, it is desirable that the Government should propose remedial legislation calculated to develop the resources of Ireland, and to increase the capacity of her people to bear taxation. I believe the suggestion that in lieu of reducing taxation which really is not felt oppressively by anybody—["oh!"]—if it were, you would be able to tell me what tax I should reduce—larger grants should be made from the common purse either towards local taxation in Ireland, or, as my right hon. Friend suggests, for reproductive purposes in Ireland, has been very favourably entertained by many persons in Ireland. I am not sure that it did not receive the blessing of the hon. Member for Waterford himself. But now let me see what that means. It means the absolute repudiation, to begin with, of the extraordinary doctrine that you are to take Ireland into consideration as a separate entity in matters of taxation, but not in matters of expenditure. It means that it is absurd to argue that the grievance, whatever it be, would be abolished if, for instance, you got rid of the existing duties on spirits and on beer in Ireland, but it would not be touched if you gave 20 millions a year to Ireland for reproductive purposes, or towards the reduction of local taxation. I confess I should prefer, on purely Unionist principles of finance, to consider this matter from the point both of common taxation and common expenditure, with a fair and due regard to the needs and wants of the poorest parts of the United Kingdom. But when Irishmen themselves, led by my right hon. Friend, whose exertions in the cause of self-help in the material interests of Ireland are worthy of all praise, ask us to remedy their grievance by giving them larger grants from the Imperial purse, in justice to the ratepayers of England and Scotland, we must consider how Irish taxation is already expended? The hon. Member who preceded me in this Debate cast, I am afraid, very grave doubts upon the Treasury Returns, and said some things with regard to the Treasury which were generally so unpleasant that I would rather not refer to them. [*Laughter and* "Hear, hear!"] I am quite sure that hon. Members opposite from Ireland, and I dare say hon. Members on this side also, will not accept the Treasury calculations as to the division between the common expenditure of the United Kingdom and the expenditure for local purposes in different parts of the United Kingdom as conclusive. Two members of the Commission—Mr. Childers and Sir David Barbour—suggested that the nature of the public expenditure in Ireland, and the possibility of reducing it, would be a very proper subject for a separate inquiry. The O'Conor Don declined to admit, on behalf of himself and his colleagues, the estimate of Irish local expenditure as set forth in the Treasury returns as correct. He said that a more careful and detailed examination of the figures was necessary. Mr. Sexton and the hon. Member for Longford said that no systematic inquiry had been attempted by the Royal Commission, and that no definite opinion could be offered without detailed inquiry on the calculations of the Treasury as to the adjustment between the revenue collected in Ireland and that contributed by her. I do not profess to put forward this evening anything which I could ask the House to accept, even as my own final conclusions upon this point. But this I will say: The Treasury have done their best, and they estimate, with regard to the year 1895-96, that the total revenue of Ireland for all purposes was £8,034,000, that of that revenue £5,938,000 was expended in Irish local services, and £2,095,000 only on Imperial services. Now, if we are to deal with this, as my right hon. Friend presses me to deal with it, on the lines of separate taxation and separate expenditure, I am obliged to say that the only real burden upon Ireland is, not the total taxation which she pays, but that amount of it which is devoted to the common expenditure of the country. And, in passing, I would add, when we are charged in this matter with robbery and plunder, and when we are told in the matter of taxation that there is an economic drain from Ireland, that more than the £2,095,500 which I have named was actually expended in Ireland upon the maintenance of the soldiers quartered there, so that, as a matter of fact, in that year the whole Irish taxation was expended in Ireland itself. [*Cheers.*] This £2,095,000 is but one-thirty-second of the total common expenditure of the United Kingdom as calculated by the Treasury, instead of the one-twentieth which ought to be Ireland's contribution, according to the estimate of her taxable capacity by the Royal Commission. [*Cheers.*] Between the years 1785 and 1791, years of peace, Ireland contributed one part to 22½ parts contributed by the United Kingdom to Imperial expenditure. In the year 1819-20 she contributed 7'28 per cent. of the total Imperial expenditure, and in 1895-96 she contributed only 3·01 per cent.

Mr. T. LOUGH (Islington, W.): Will the right hon. Gentleman give us the populations?

*The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: I am talking of the contribution. Her taxation was increased, no doubt, between 1853 and 1860; but how has it been spent? In the year 1859-60 70 per cent. of the revenue raised in Ireland was spent for the common purposes of the United Kingdom, and 30 per cent. only for Irish local services. In the year 1895-96, 26 per cent. of the revenue raised in Ireland was spent for Imperial purposes—common expenditure—and 74 per cent. on Irish local services. Well may Sir David Barbour say in his Report:—

> "If Ireland pays more revenue in proportion to her resources, she receives back the whole of the excess and at least £1,000,000 in addition in expenditure for Irish purposes."

As a matter of fact, if we were to give back to Ireland now, from the common purse, the £2,691,000 which hon. Members below the Gangway opposite claim, the result would be that Ireland would contribute nothing whatever to the common expenditure of the United Kingdom, but would receive a tribute from England and Scotland of £600,000 for her own purposes. [*Cheers.*]

MR. T. M. HEALY: Is England running Ireland at a loss? [*Nationalist cheers and Ministerial cries of* "Order."]

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Of course, the answer to this is that the expenditure from the Exchequer upon Irish local services is too large. No doubt it is very large— [*Nationalist cries of* "Why?"]—if you compare it either with revenue or population.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): Then end the partnership. [*Nationalist cheers and Ministerial cries of* "Order!"]

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: The Irish revenue from all sources is 7½ per cent. of the revenue of the United Kingdom from all sources. The Exchequer expenditure on local services in Ireland is 15½ per cent. of the total expenditure of the United Kingdom from the Exchequer for local services. In Ireland 26s. per head of the population is spent by the Exchequer on local services, and 18s. 8d. in Great Britain. If you exclude the collection of revenue and the postal service from the definition of local services, 21s. 5d. per head is the expenditure on local services in Ireland, and only 12s. per head in Great Britain. ["What are local services?" *and* "What about the Secret Service?"] If Irish taxation were reduced according to the estimate of taxable capacity laid down by the Commissioners, Ireland would give absolutely nothing to Imperial expenditure, but there would be a deficit of £500,000 a year for local services alone. [Mr. T. M. HEALY: "Give us back our country!" *and cheers.*]

*MR. SPEAKER: I beg that hon. Members will not interrupt the right hon. Gentleman who is in possession of the House.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I think we listened very patiently to the hon. Gentleman the Member for Longford—[*cheers*]—and I claim to be heard on such a question as this. ["Hear, hear!"] It is said that this local expenditure in Ireland is monstrous and excessive. It has been said by Mr. Sexton that it is a flagrant evil. It was argued not long ago by a very eminent prelate, Bishop O'Dwyer, of Limerick, that it is forced upon Ireland by this Parliament. He contended that the expenditure on the Land Court was due to the Imperial Parliament; as if Land Courts would ever have been instituted at all if the matter had been left to English Members to decide. [*A laugh.*] He contended that the expenditure for the constabulary was excessive. I do not know why Irishmen should not pay for keeping the peace if they insist on— [*An* HON. MEMBER: "Breaking it," *and loud laughter.*] He described the present system of elementary education as forced upon Ireland by the British Parliament. I can only say that time after time I have known Irish Nationalist representatives press us to increase the expenditure on this system of education. But, of course, we are told that this expenditure would be decreased, perhaps by three millions a year, by the change which would result from Home Rule in Ireland. I have always doubted that assertion; it is an hypothesis quite incapable of proof on either side. I would just ask the House, before they accept it, to consider for one moment what are the elements of this expenditure. Why is it so large? It is large not so much because Irish local administration costs more as because the Exchequer provides for more of it. ["Hear, hear!"] That is the real truth of the matter. For every pound that is spent in local administration in Ireland the Exchequer pays 13s. 6d., while the rates pay only 6s. 6d. For every pound that is spent on local administration in Great Britain the Exchequer pays 9s. 6d. and the rates pay 10s. 6d. [*Cheers.*] That is the main secret of this large Irish expenditure. The expenditure from the Exchequer upon Irish local services exceeds by £2,165,000 a year what it would be if it was in the same proportion to the population as it is in England. Now, how is this made up? Part of it, no doubt, is due, in my humble opinion, to excessive cost of, for instance, the Irish legal and judicial establishments— ["hear, hear!"]—which I should be very glad to see reduced—[*cheers*]—and if hon. Gentlemen from Ireland will help us to reduce them, I promise that they shall have back for other purposes every penny they save. But the main part of it—no less than £1,570,000 of the £2,165,000 —is due to the cost of services undertaken and provided for by the State in

Ireland, but not in England, and by charges on the Exchequer for Irish local services, a great part of which in England falls on the local rates. For example, the whole cost of police in Ireland, instead of half of it as in England, falls on the Exchequer; and nearly the whole cost of elementary education, instead of two-thirds of it as in England, is borne by the Exchequer. I do not want to argue to-night whether that is right or wrong—["hear, hear!"] —but I would say that I think the fact I have stated shows the large Exchequer expenditure in Ireland cannot all be set down to extravagance, nor can it be called a necessary incident of a centralised and unpopular government. What has happened is this. Ireland has anticipated the rest of the United Kingdom in obtaining a larger transfer of the burthen of local services from the rates to the Exchequer than England or Scotland. That policy, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, I am sorry to say, is becoming increasingly popular throughout the United Kingdom, and I dare say Ireland will have her full share of it in the future. I have noticed that, while I have been quoting these figures as shortly as I could, hon. Members below the Gangway have been inclined to dispute them altogether. That is precisely my case. I do not quote them as authoritative. I do not ask hon. Members to accept them as true. I have merely quoted them as *primâ facie* proof that there is something in this matter which requires further investigation. ["Hear, hear!"] We are asked by my right hon. Friend the Member for South Dublin, we shall be asked by other hon. Members from Ireland, to meet this grievance by additional grants from the Imperial Exchequer. I have endeavoured to show how the accounts, so far as the Treasury are aware, stand now. The whole account may require rectification. That is my case. I wish for an inquiry into this matter by an impartial tribunal. I want an inquiry into it by persons whose verdict may be accepted as conclusive by hon. Members below the Gangway as well as by ourselves, and I maintain that it cannot be controverted that this inquiry has formed no part whatever of the work of the late Royal Commission, and that it cannot, as Lord Farrer has suggested, be fairly and properly settled merely by Treasury Returns. We desire in this matter to do full justice to the claim of Ireland, aye, and of Scotland too—["hear, hear!"]—under the proviso as to particular exemptions and abatements in the Act of Union; we desire that the facts as to expenditure shall be also carefully investigated; and when those facts are fully ascertained, when the meaning of that proviso is laid down and its application to our existing circumstances is shown by a tribunal in whose verdict both sides may have confidence, then I can assure the House it will be our desire to endeavour to do full justice in this matter to the poorest parts of the United Kingdom. But under this one condition—we will take no step whatever to depart from that system of common taxation which was established in 1817—["hear, hear!"]—we will do nothing to impair either the financial or the political permanence of the Union between Great Britain and Ireland—[*cheers*]—least of all will we give any countenance to the monstrous doctrine that any part of the United Kingdom should be relieved from its fair obligation to contribute to the necessities of the National Debt, of the Army and of the Navy, and to the maintenance of our great Empire. [*Cheers.*]

SIR EDWARD CLARKE (Plymouth) moved the Adjournment of the Debate.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I do not rise, of course, to object to my hon. and learned Friend's Motion. I understand that the Debate is to close on Wednesday evening, and therefore I will not contend for the other ten minutes.

Debate Adjourned till To-morrow.

MILITARY WORKS (MONEY) BILL.

Third Reading deferred till Thursday.

MILITARY LANDS ACT (1892) AMENDMENT BILL.

Considered in Committee, and reported; as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

SUPPLY [26TH MARCH].

Resolution reported.

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS, 1897-8 (VOTE ON ACCOUNT).

"That a sum, not exceeding £10,631,218, be granted to Her Majesty, on account, for or towards defraying the Charges for the following Civil Services and Revenue Departments for the year ending on the 31st day of March 1898, viz.:—

CIVIL SERVICES—CLASS II.

	£
Local Government Board	60,000
Home Office and Subordinate Departments . .	40,000
Stationery Office and Printing . . .	240,000

CLASS I.

Royal Palaces and Marlborough House . .	12,000
Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens . . .	32,000
Houses of Parliament Buildings	12,000
Admiralty, Extension of Buildings . . .	15,000
Miscellaneous Legal Buildings, Gerat Britain .	24,000
Art and Science Buildings, Great Britain . .	10,000
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings . . .	8,000
Revenue Department Buildings, Great Britain .	120,000
Public Buildings, Great Britain	70,000
Surveys of the United Kingdom . . .	80,000
Harbours, &c., under Board of Trade, and Lighthouses Abroad . .	7,000
Peterhead Harbour .	6,000
Rates on Government Property	210,000
Public Works and Buildings, Ireland . . .	70,000
Railways, Ireland . .	70,000

CLASS II.

United Kingdom and England:—

	£
House of Lords, Offices .	6,000
House of Commons, Offices	9,000
Treasury and Subordinate Departments . . .	30,000
Foreign Office . . .	22,000
Colonial Office . . .	14,000
Privy Council Office, &c. .	5,000
Board of Trade and Subordinate Departments .	57,000
Mercantile Marine Fund, Grant in Aid . . .	15,000
Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade .	3
Board of Agriculture . .	75,000
Charity Commission . .	14,000
Civil Service Commission .	13,000
Exchequer and Audit Department . . .	20,000
Friendly Societies, Registry	2,200
Lunacy Commission . .	4,500
Mint (including Coinage) .	10
National Debt Office . .	5,000
Public Record Office .	8,000
Public Works Loan Commission	2,500
Registrar General's Office .	13,000
Woods, Forests, &c., Office of	7,000
Works and Public Buildings, Office of . .	19,000
Secret Service . . .	17,000

Scotland:—

Secretary for Scotland .	4,000
Fishery Board . . .	8,000
Lunacy Commission .	2,000
Registrar General's Office .	2,000
Local Government Board .	4,000

Ireland:—

Lord Lieutenant's Household	2,000
Chief Secretary and Subordinate Departments .	15,000
Charitable Donations and Bequests Office . .	700
Local Government Board .	25,000
Public Record Office .	2,000
Public Works Office .	12,000
Registrar General's Office .	5,500
Valuation and Boundary Survey	6,000

CLASS III.

United Kingdom and England:—

Law Charges . . .	40,000
Miscellaneous Legal Expenses	18,000
Supreme Court of Judicature	120,000
Land Registry . . .	2,700
County Courts . .	5,000
Police Courts (London and Sheerness) . . .	1.500
Police, England and Wales	14,000
Prisons, England and the Colonies . . .	180,000
Reformatory and Industrial Schools, Great Britain .	140,000
Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum . . .	10,000

Scotland:—

Law Charges and Courts of Law	30,000
Register House, Edinburgh	13,000
Crofters Commission . .	2,000
Prisons, Scotland . .	30,000

	£
Ireland :—	
Law Charges and Criminal Prosecutions	24,000
Supreme Court of Judicature, and other Legal Departments	38,000
Land Commission	39,000
County Court Offices, &c.	36,000
Dublin Metropolitan Police (including Police Courts)	28,000
Constabulary	600,000
Prisons, Ireland	45,000
Reformatory and Industrial Schools	55,000
Dundrum Criminal Lunatic Asylum	2,500

Class IV.

	£
United Kingdom and England :—	
Public Education, England and Wales	3,000,000
Science and Art Department, United Kingdom	260,000
British Museum	54,000
National Gallery	6,000
National Portrait Gallery	2,000
Scientific Investigations, &c., United Kingdom	12,000
Universities and Colleges, Great Britain, and Intermediate Education, Wales	38,000
London University	5
Scotland :—	
Public Education	550,000
National Gallery	1,400
Ireland :—	
Public Education	550,000
Endowed Schools Commissioners	400
National Gallery	800
Queen's Colleges	2,500

Class V.

	£
Diplomatic Services and Consular Services	200,000
Uganda, Central and East Africa Protectorates, and Uganda Railway	44,000
Colonial Services, including South Africa	45,000
Cyprus, Grant in Aid	39,000
Slave Trade Services	1,500
Subsidies to Telegraph Companies, &c.	33,000

Class VI.

	£
Superannuation and Retired Allowances	270,000
Merchant Seamen's Fund Pensions, &c.	4,000
Miscellaneous Charitable and other Allowances, Great Britain	1,000
Pauper Lunatics, Ireland	120,000
Hospitals and Charities, Ireland	9,000

Class VII.

	£
Temporary Commissions	12,000
Miscellaneous Expenses	1,500
Highlands and Islands of Scotland	8,000
Total for Civil Services	8,271,218

Revenue Departments.

	£
Customs	90,000
Inland Revenue	180,000
Post Office	900,000
Post Office Packet Service	190,000
Post Office Telegraphs	1,000,000
Total for Revenue Departments	2,360,000
Grand Total	£10,631,218"

Resolution Read a Second time.

CRETE.

Mr. PHILIP STANHOPE (Burnley) rose to move, on Class 2, Vote 5 (Salary of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), to reduce the item by £1,666. He said it would be remembered that his hon. Friend the Member for Northampton took advantage of the Committee stage to move a similar reduction in the salary of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, but the First Lord of the Treasury said he thought the opportunity chosen was a bad one, because the Opposition had not thought it proper to raise the subject on a Vote of Censure. He believed the only reason why this matter had not been raised in that way by Gentlemen on the Front Opposition Bench was because the Leader of the Opposition was unfortunately ill and unable to be in the House. He had no doubt that when the right hon. Gentleman was again amongst them he would seize an early opportunity of taking up that challenge. ["Hear, hear!"] However that might be, it was the duty of independent Members of the Opposition to take every opportunity of raising this question, and particularly at the present moment. Since the last occasion on which they had had a Debate on the question, there had been developments of a most unsatisfactory, dangerous and alarming character in the affairs of Crete. ["Hear, hear!"] The First Lord of the Treasury some three weeks ago told the House that the policy of Her Majesty's Government was to secure the peace of Europe and the freedom of the island of Crete. So far as the peace of Europe was concerned, affairs never looked more menacing—100,000 men on one side, and 60,000 men on the other, were prepared to rush into war, and no action on the part of the Concert of Europe seemed likely to prevent it. ["Hear, hear!"] On the other hand, the freedom of Crete was being assisted by the bombardment of the insurgents by the Fleets of the six Powers. ["Hear, hear!"] That night, in answer to a Question by his hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, a series of interesting extracts from dispatches was read by the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs from the Admiral commanding the British Fleet. That officer gave some exceedingly unsatisfactory details as to the action of the British Fleet in those waters, and it must have been with universal regret that the House heard that British troops had been played into their quarters by Turks to the strain of their national air. [*Cheers.*] The British Admiral made use of this remarkable expression:—"The general situation in the island is, that the forces of Colonel Vassos have declared war on the Great Powers." He would have said that the Great Powers had declared war on Colonel Vassos and his gallant men, who came as brothers-in-arms to help the Cretans when they were struggling for freedom. ["Hear, hear!"] All sympathy for the Cretans seemed now to have vanished. There was nothing but a desire to use pressure and force in order to prevent the success of Greece, and to impose on the Cretans an autonomy they did not want. ["Hear, hear!"] They had been taunted with having no policy. That was not the case. Their policy was, first, that the Government should signify that all Turkish troops should be immediately withdrawn from Crete; secondly, that they should cooperate with the Greek troops in pacifying the island; and thirdly, that the autonomy should be under Greek influences, with some governor at its head agreeable to Greek ideas, and should be merely a step towards the eventual union of Crete with Greece. ["Hear, hear!"] Let the Government have the courage of their convictions, and unless they could secure freedom in Crete and tranquillity to Europe, let them take no part in that Concert of Europe which had signally failed to perform its objects. They had received tidings of another massacre in Armenia, where, according to different accounts, 400 or 700 Armenians had been slaughtered at Tokat. What had the Concert of Europe done during the last two years in order to save these unhappy Armenians? If they had failed in Armenia, do not let them repeat the blunder in Crete. The Turkish troops had shown a disposition to evacuate Crete. He called upon the Government to show themselves willing, not only to be a member of the Concert of Europe, but to be representative of the British people, who were determined that liberty and freedom should not be destroyed. He begged to move the Motion standing in his name.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY: I hope the House will not follow the hon. Gentleman in repeating these fragmentary, inconclusive, and unsatisfactory Debates upon the difficult question which has now arisen in the East of Europe. ["Hear, hear!"] If the hon. Gentleman is genuinely anxious, as I do not doubt he is, about the freedom of Crete—by which I understand him to mean the freedom of Crete from Turkish domination—I can assure him that his action is absolutely unnecessary. He has asked for a distinct pledge from Her Majesty's Government on the subject. I confess I had thought that our policy had been stated in the clearest terms before. [*Cheers.*] But if there is any ambiguity hanging over our statements, I now beg to dissipate it for the hon. Gentleman's benefit by declaring, as I do, in the clearest terms that can be used in connection with the subject, that the Great Powers in general, and this country in particular, feel themselves pledged to give autonomy to Crete, and by autonomy we distinctly mean that Crete shall not henceforth be subjected to the domination, in her affairs, of Constantinople and the Porte. [*Cheers.*] That is a statement which I trust will relieve the hon. Gentleman from the anxiety he tells us he feels on the subject; and, having relieved him from that anxiety, I hope nothing will be done to prolong the Debate, which, if it can have any effect at all—beyond keeping us up to an unusually late hour tonight—would have the effect perhaps of hampering the Government in carrying out a policy which I understand the hon. Gentleman himself approves. That being the case, I trust he will not press his

Motion to a Division, and that he and his Friends will agree with me in thinking that the sooner this Debate is brought to a close the better for the general interests of Europe and the dignity of this House. [*Cheers.*]

MR. JAMES BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) said the right hon. Gentleman seemed to think that enough had been said when he had pointed out that a pledge of autonomy had been given to Crete. They were all aware that such a pledge had been given; but what they had said before and what they must repeat now was, that the present situation in Crete was due to the failure of the Powers to take the obvious method of pacifying Crete—namely, the withdrawal of the Turkish troops, which were a standing provocation to disorder in the island. In the second place, they must ask again that there must be a clear declaration of the terms of this promised autonomy. At present it was confined to the word "autonomy"—

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I beg the right hon. Gentleman's pardon. I distinctly stated in the clearest terms that autonomy means absolute freedom in local concerns from the control of the Porte. [*Cheers.*]

MR. BRYCE said that if the right hon. Gentleman had permitted him to finish his sentence, he would have understood that what he had desired to convey was that the pledge given in the House was not known to the insurgents of Crete, and that it ought to be made clear to the insurgents that they were to have a Christian governor, that he was to be irremovable by the Porte; and, above all, that, he was to be free from the possibility of all interference from Constantinople. If a plan of that kind were brought to the knowledge of the insurgents, all the information available led to the belief that fighting would cease, and that the removal of the Turkish troops would be followed by the pacification of the island. The serious danger of war which now threatened not only Crete but the northern frontiers of Greece would then be averted. He would not ask for a further pledge in the House, but an assurance that the Government was going to take the obvious method of pacifying Crete, the only alternative to which was a policy of starvation, or the undertaking of military operations against the insurgents. As to the present position of affairs in Asia Minor, it was exceedingly alarming. No steps had been taken, as far as was known, to carry out the reforms initiated by Her Majesty's Government in September last. In September the correspondence began; in January the proposals of the Ambassadors had not been brought before the Powers, and apparently the Powers had not yet considered them. It would be said that the disturbances in Crete had intervened. There had been plenty of time before the Cretan troubles began; and, even now, the position of Crete was accentuating the dangers in Asia Minor. It was a matter of as much urgency to prevent further troubles there as to pacify Crete. There was a significant feature about the massacre of the other day. Tokat and Erbah were the only cities which escaped massacre in 1895. It seemed as though the few places in which the Armenian people were beginning to gather again were to be subjected to further massacres; and it was quite clear from the Blue-books, and from the accounts of travellers, that no massacres occurred in Asia Minor unless with the permission of the Palace. The massacre at Tokat was a serious warning of what must be expected unless drastic measures were taken. The promises of the Sultan and his offers of a Commission of Inquiry were mere waste paper. He should think the Government now wished that they had taken the advice offered to them in 1895, and had endeavoured to bring about the Sultan's deposition. It was the only efficient remedy. [*Cheers.*] Unless some measure of that kind were taken, there would be further revolutionary movements. Agitation was now going on, and these attempted insurrections would probably be followed by further massacres. The whole Turkish Empire seemed to be rapidly drifting to an abyss, and unless the Powers of Europe could rouse themselves and limit its powers terrible calamities would ensue to the Cretan subjects of the Porte, and what would be worse a European war. The only escape from this was to at once apply such coercive powers as would destroy the power of the present ruler of Turkey. Only a few weeks or months might be left within which to avert even worse calamities than those of the last few years.

MR. DILLON protested against the proceedings of the Powers described by the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs at Question time. He declared that the six Great Powers of Europe had declared war on the insurgents.

*Mr. CURZON: I do not say anything of the kind. The hon. Member must not misquote me.

Mr. DILLON: The right hon. Gentleman said that the Admirals—who appeared to be the instigators of the situation in Crete—[*Ministerial cries of* "Oh!"]—had decided on their own responsibility that insurgents in Crete were to be treated as enemies.

*Mr. CURZON: I cannot allow these persistent misinterpretations from hon. Members opposite, more especially from the hon. Member. After detailing the constant attacks made by the insurgents on the positions occupied by the Great Powers I said—in the words of the Admirals—that if these attacks were persisted in the Admirals had decided that it would be necessary to treat the insurgents as enemies. [*Opposition cheers.*]

Mr. DILLON denied that the insurgents had attacked any position occupied by the Great Powers. He defied the right hon. Gentleman to point to a single instance. In view of the appalling condition of things, that the six Great Powers should be aiding the Sultan to put down 200,000 unhappy Christians in Crete who had been for months struggling to save themselves from extermination and assassination, it was outrageous that the right hon. Gentleman, to prejudice the case of these gallant men, should tell the House what was not true. [*Ministerial cries of* "Oh!" *and* "Withdraw!"]

*Mr. SPEAKER: If the hon. Gentleman means to say that the right hon. Gentleman stated what he knows was not true, of course it would be entirely out of order; but I did not understand the hon. Gentleman to imply that. [*Irish cheers.*]

Mr. DILLON said that Mr. Speaker had correctly interpreted his remarks. Although the right hon. Gentleman was at the Foreign Office he did not appear to be correctly informed, and he would tell him what did occur, on the authority of *The Times* and the *Standard.* [*Ministerial laughter.*] He observed with amazement that the Tory Party treated with surprise the authority of *The Times* and the *Standard* in this matter. What he was about to read was from an eye-witness, and was telegraphed to and published in the *Standard* [*An* hon. Member: "What is his name?"] He is the accredited correspondent of the *Standard*, a journal favourable to the Tory Party and not very favourable to the Cretan cause. Now what did this gentleman say?—

> "At about two o'clock the insurgents recommenced firing, one of their guns being pushed forward to within 20 yards of the fort, and an hour later the white flag was hoisted. The Turks were being shelled on both sides, and had had nothing to eat or drink for three days. I at once ran down the hill, and found the fort surrounded by about fifteen hundred Cretans, many of whom had their rifles thrust through crevices in the walls, whilst the approach to the gateway was filled by an excited throng. Luckily, five Greek Regular officers were present, and succeeded in temporarily restraining their men until I arrived, and was able to parley through the gate with a Turkish sergeant, who asked my advice as to whether he should open. Seeing no help for it, I counselled him to do so, and at this moment the fleets, mistaking the white flag for the Greek ensign, fired the first of their shells, knocking off a corner of the wall. Both the Turks and Greeks were at a loss to understand their action in firing on a flag of truce. While I was hastening through the archway, another shell smashed the whole of the masonry, burying two or three men, both Turks and Cretans. This led to a general helter-skelter from the doomed fort, everybody running away at the top of their speed."

No wonder they ran at the top of their speed. [*Ministerial laughter.*] It was very amusing to hon. Gentlemen opposite; but he said it was a most infamous and scandalous transaction. [*Opposition cheers.*] According to these English correspondents the result of the action of the Admirals was in the first place to fire on the white flag, and in the second place to throw shells among Turks and Cretans, the first of which buried the Turks under the masonry of their own fort. The Correspondent of *The Times* confirmed the statement of the *Standard* correspondent, and said in addition:—

> "As soon as the Christian artillery had rendered further defence impracticable, the Turks raised a white flag, and the whole body of the adjacent insurgents rushed forward. Luckily for the defenders, the first man to enter the fortress was Manos, a young Oxford man, who leads a band of young Cretans called the Hieros Lochos, whom he has equipped. By his personal exertions, and those of one or two others, the insurgents were prevailed upon to spare the lives of 43 prisoners, who were conveyed to Kontopulo, and afterwards to Alikianu. As the Christians were congratulating themselves on their success, shells from the European warships drove most

of the insurgents to shelter. One heavy shell passed clean through the blockhouse, destroying the greater part of one wall, and killing one Christian and two Turks."

Was there ever heard of in civilised or uncivilised warfare such an insane and monstrous proceeding as that? [*Opposition cheers.*] The Correspondent added that the condition of things in Crete was going rapidly from bad to worse; the Admirals were of opinion something should be done, and it was proposed "that the Turkish troops should be forthwith withdrawn as a condition of the restoration of peace." He thought something should be done with the Admirals to restrain their operations. For his part he said the condition of things in Crete was an outrage on common sense, and the almost unanimous sense of the people of this country. It was idle for the First Lord of the Treasury to come down to the House night after night and make appeals to hon. Members not to engage in discussion—

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY: I did not appeal to the House not to engage in discussion. I appealed to them, if they wished to discuss the matter they should discuss it in a manner in which it can be thoroughly thrashed out, and have the common courage to move a Vote of Censure. [*Ministerial cheers.*]

MR. DILLON (who was received with cries of "Move") said it was the privilege of Leaders of the Opposition to select their own time, and he found no fault with them in having determined not to move a Vote of Censure until the Government had revealed what was their policy. [*Ministerial laughter and Opposition cheers.*] It was idle for the First Lord to say that the policy of the Government was a policy of freedom for Crete and peace in Europe. He did not pretend to be in the secrets of the Foreign Office or to be an authority on foreign affairs. [*Ironical Ministerial cheers.*] He was as little an authority on foreign affairs as the electors who sent hon. Gentlemen opposite to the House. [*Laughter.*] When the public read the description given by the special correspondents of British troops marching between lines of Turkish troops through the streets of Candia, played to their quarters by a Turkish band, and returning the compliment by playing the Hamadieh Hymn, he said the feeling would be that the instruments of an English band ought not to be sullied by such strains. [*Cheers.*] Again, when it was read that on Sunday the British flag was planted side by side with the flag of the Osmanli, on the ramparts of the walls of Candia, in presence of the population of the town, it was idle to say that the Cretans believed that England came to them as friends. [*Cheers.*] If the Government really meant to win the confidence of the insurgents and to get them to forget the broken promises and the betrayals of last autumn, they ought not to go to them in company with their oppressors and slaughterers. The situation was an outrage on common sense and a mockery. In spite of all the pledges of the Powers, Canea was handed over in February last to a scene of carnage, plunder, and outrage. If the insurgents of Crete were wise men they would keep their arms in their hands. [*Cheers.*] They could not trust the pledges of the Government. [*Cheers.*] They could not trust to the friendship of the Admirals, which was only known to them in the form of bursting shells. They could not trust to the military officers at the head of the British troops when they saw them hobnobbing with their oppressors. The insurgents could only trust to three things: to that nation which had never deserted them through centuries of persecution and torture, to the inaccessible nature of their mountains, and to the public opinion of Europe, which he trusted would yet rise to their relief. The Powers were now to treat them as enemies. What had been their treatment for the last fortnight? In one hand a proclamation of liberty, and on the other hand districts of the island were by blockade reduced to starvation. It would be just as well for the Under Secretary to speak the truth at once, that the public might know what was being done in their name and by English armaments against a people struggling to be free, for he believed the Government would find before long that public opinion was opposed to their action. ["Oh, oh!"]

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. G. CURZON, Lancashire, Southport): I do not know whether the speech to which we have just listened should be more correctly described as an outrage or as a farce. [*Cheers and cries of* "Oh, oh!"] It is an outrage if one expects, in a speech on an important question in this House, that any attention should be paid by the speaker to truth or reason or fact. [*Ministerial cheers.*] It is a farce if one expects from such a speech any effect whatever except one of disgust in the mind of the public. [*Ministerial cheers.*] I have not risen to continue this Debate. ["Oh, oh!"] I have not risen even to repel the charges against myself which the hon. Member has thought fit to make.

MR. DILLON: Because you are not able to. [*Opposition cheers.*]

*MR. CURZON: I have at least as much capacity to defend myself as the hon. Member has to make unmannerly interruptions. [*Ministerial cheers; Opposition cries of* "Oh, oh!"] I have not risen to defend myself, because, after all, it has merely been my duty to read to the House the official information that we have received from our representatives acting under circumstances of great responsibility and difficulty in Crete—[*Ministerial cheers*]—reports which are not lightly to be brushed aside or put aside either on the strength of what may appear in the newspapers or still less on the *ipse dixit* of the hon. Member for East Mayo. [*Ministerial cheers.*] The hon. Gentleman has boldly charged the Government with having taken the side of Turkey. ["Hear, hear!"] That charge is absolutely false. [*Cheers.*] On behalf of the Government I repel it and deny it *in toto*. [*Cheers.*] Considering that it has been due to Her Majesty's Government, in the first place, that Crete has been taken from Turkey—[*ironical Nationalist laughter and cheers*]—and autonomy has been promised and guaranteed to Crete; that the Turkish Government have been prevented from sending reinforcements to the island; that the Turkish troops have been confined within the coast-ports and garrisons of the island; that it has been due to the action of the international troops that the lives of thousands of Christians have been saved; that it has been due to their action that the lives of thousands of Mussulmans, who, after all, are Greeks quite as much as the Christians, have also been saved; considering that the only thing that now stands in the way of a war of absolute extermination in the island is the presence of the contingents of the Great Powers and their action, I say it is a monstrous travesty and perversion of the truth to say that the Powers have taken the side of Turkey as against the side of Crete. [*Cheers.*] Then the hon. Member takes the case of Candia, and says that the contingents of the Powers have there intervened in the interests of the Mussulmans, and he makes a great point about this incident in the streets of the town. I can tell him this—if the troops of the Great Powers had not been landed in Candia many thousands of his friends the insurgents might not be alive at this moment. [*Cheers.*] He owes it to the action of the Powers that their lives have been saved, and if he cares little or nothing for Mussulmans, even when they are Greeks, as his action when the relief of Candano took place the other day showed—["hear, hear!"]—let him at least show some consideration on behalf of those for whom he professes to speak, but who, I venture to say, would disown any such spokesman. [*Nationalist cries of* "Oh!" *and cheers.*] The hon. Member has made a great point about the action of the Admirals during the past few days, and he says that the insurgents are not threatening the posts occupied by the Powers.—[MR. DILLON: "I said 'attacking.'"]—Well, that they do not attack the positions occupied by the Powers. But what are the facts? The positions occupied by the Powers are commanded by a number of outposts and blockhouses. Does the hon. Member contend that the forces of the Powers are to sit still in the towns and to allow these outposts in the surrounding hills to be occupied by the insurgents, with guns borrowed from the Greeks, with which they are to bombard and turn out the forces of the Powers from their positions?

MR. DILLON: What I said was that if there was that danger, the troops of the Powers ought to get between the Turks and the insurgents. [*Loud laughter.*]

*MR. CURZON: I confess that the ideas of the hon. Member as a military strategist fill me with dismay, and I cannot help feeling glad for the sake of the insurgents in the island that they are not led by a gentleman with the military ideas of the hon. Member. [*Laughter.*] I was pointing out when the hon. Member interrupted me that the insurgents had been steadily occupying these positions which command the towns, that they had done so in distinct violation and disregard of warnings addessed to them over and over again by the Admirals, that they knew perfectly well the consequences that would ensue from this advance, and that any attack or bombardment to which they may have been subjected was therefore invited by them. To represent such movements as movements on behalf of the Turk or as hostile movements directed against the insurgents *qua* insurgents, or as an outrage on humanity, is a complete perversion of fact. ["Hear, hear!"] The hon. Gentleman then went on to say that the policy of the Powers was directed not merely to the extermination of the insurgents, but to the starvation of the people. [*Nationalist cheers.*] What right has he to say so? (Several HON. MEMBERS: "Facts!" *and cheers.*] By facts the Opposition merely mean what they cull from the newspapers. [*Laughter.*] The hon. Gentleman is quite unaware of the fact that the Admirals have taken special measures to consider this matter of the food supplies to the people and that they have taken steps and are taking steps to supply provisions to the peaceable inhabitants of the island—[*ironical Opposition laughter*]—so far as the conditions permit them to do so. I have nothing more to add. [*Ironical laughter.*] I have risen only to repel the most unfair charge brought by the hon. Gentleman to the effect that this country or that the Powers in general are taking one side against the other. Their one object is the restoration of peace and order in the island, and I am bound to say that the attitude taken up by hon. Gentlemen opposite—not, I admit, on the Front Bench—[Mr. LABOUCHERE: "Yes, Bryce!" *laughter*]—but below the Gangway—is an attitude that is not likely to help the Government or to help the Powers in the duty which they have set before them. [*Ministerial cheers.*]

AN IRISH MEMBER: "Tommy rot!" [*Laughter.*]

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! If I knew the hon. Member who made use of that expression, I should call the attention of the House to his conduct. [*Ministerial cheers.*]

SIR R. REID (Dumfries Burghs) said he did not think any advantage would be gained by entering upon or continuing any spirit of recrimination. The matter to his mind was far too serious; but, accepting the entire accuracy of all the statements of the Under Secretary, was it not a fair inference to the Gentlemen who supported the Government that the present was a very serious position? *Cheers and counter cheers.*] The policy which the Government had thought wise in the interests of the pacification of Crete had led them into rather a false position. They commenced by reprobating the conduct of Greece, and in consequence of that they proceeded to blockade Crete. He did not see the logic of that position. ["Hear, hear!"] Further they had issued a proclamation which he thought ought to be submitted to the criticism of the House at the earliest possible moment. [*Cheers and counter cheers.*] He believed that it was going contrary to international law, and when the matter came to be discussed he thought it would be very difficult for the Law Officers to defend a proclamation in which he could not but think from its contents they had no serious part. In addition to that they found that the attempts towards the pacification of Crete were placing us practically in a position of war—of hostile operations, at all events—against the insurgents in the island. He could not help feeling that such operations as the bombardment reported this morning of a village containing nothing but women and children, though they might be lightly cheered by thoughtless supporters of the Government, did not commend themselves to the sober judgment of the older and more experienced Members of the House. [*Cheers.*] Nobody who thought of it could doubt that this was an extremely grave and serious question. ["Hear, hear!"] He did not intend to dwell upon it, because the subject had so many sides, and could be considered from so many points of view—for example, its bearing on the whole aspect of the Eastern question—["hear, hear!"]—that it could not be adequately debated in sporadic discussions. [*Ministerial cheers.*] His hon. Friend the Member for Burnley was bound, as they had been bound from time to time, to bring it forward, on such occasions as they could command. An offer had been made by the Leader of the House—[*Ministerial cheers*]—to the

Leader of the Opposition of a day for the full discussion of this subject. He had not the slightest intimation as to what course might be taken by his right hon. Friend, but he did not doubt that he would take a wise course. In his opinion he was bound to say the wise course was to raise as soon as possible, in such a fashion that they might be able to record their opinion in that House—[*Ministerial cheers*]—the whole question of the policy of Her Majesty's Government in Crete. [*Cheers and counter cheers.*] For his part he most deeply deplored that policy. He believed it was unwise, and he could not help thinking that it was now creeping into the minds of some of the friends of the Government and of some Members of the Government itself that it was not so wise and successful as they anticipated. But whether it was right or wrong, he hoped they would have—and he could not doubt from the wisdom of the Leader of the Opposition that they would have—an early opportunity of placing their real views fairly before the House, and of taking the judgment of the House, leaving upon those who chose to support the Government in its policy the heavy responsibility of the course they had adopted. [*Cheers.*]

*MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) desired to associate himself entirely both as to matter and tone with what had just fallen from his hon. and learned Friend. He hoped with his hon. and learned Friend that very soon an opportunity might be found and seized of enabling the House to discuss this question in all its length and breadth. He fully acknowledged the gravity of the issues raised. He noticed that his right hon. Friend the Member for Montrose Burghs on Friday night deprecated this question being drawn into the pure Party cauldron. He ventured to deprecate that also, and he believed that there was a great deal more unanimity on this question on both sides of the House as to the way in which the honour, dignity, reputation, and power of this great country should be used in the East, than was sometimes supposed. He did hope they would no longer be obliged to raise this question in a sporadic manner, as these occasions did not afford to anyone the opportunity to which he was entitled of stating his opinions fairly to the House. There were many points which occurred to him on hearing the statement of the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, whose manner certainly left something to be desired. It was not the function of the Under Secretary to treat his colleagues in the House in the way in which the right hon. Gentleman sometimes did. It was always a pleasure to approach the right hon. Gentleman privately, and he wished the right hon. Gentleman would in his place show a little of that perfect courtesy of manner which he did in private. But he rose particularly to join with the hon. and learned Member for Dumfries in the expression of the hope that they would have an early opportunity of going into this matter in all its details.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) said that if the pure forms of the Constitution were observed in reference to the movement of the forces of the Crown, he took it that without any Vote of Censure they would have an opportunity of expressing their view upon the present situation. The expenditure of money on the movement of the Seaforth Highlanders to Crete was a matter on which the House must sooner or later have an opportunity of pronouncing an opinion without the moving of a Vote of Censure. Let him say one word of warning to hon. Gentlemen opposite respecting a Vote of Censure. Hon. Gentleman hoped that the voting on a Vote of Censure would end the opposition to their policy. He remembered circumstances not dissimilar to the present about the time of the treaty of San Stefano. The Leader of the Opposition, Lord Hartington, was unwilling to move a Vote of Censure upon the policy of the Government. A private Member of great authority, Mr. Gladstone, proposed to move a Vote of Censure, but only 110, half the Liberal Party, could be found to promise him their support. What happened? Within three years the country undoubtedly pronounced upon the side of the 110 Members of the House of Commons. At the present time he believed there was a far stronger feeling of profound dissatisfaction in the country at the policy which the Government were pursuing than there was at the policy which was being pursued at the time of which he spoke. The defence of their policy made by the Government was mainly comprised in the application by Lord Salisbury to the action of the Greek Government and the King of the Hellenes of the term filibustering. The hon. Member cheered that he had the courage of his opinions. [*A laugh.*] If they looked at the history of Crete, at its connection with Greece on the mainland, if they looked at history, how could they term the Greeks filibusters? The hon. Member, no doubt, had prayed for the success of Garibaldi. His expedition was welcomed universally, and he was praised and fêted as a hero. England employed her strength to prevent the Great Powers menacing him, and now in a case enormously stronger, they applied the term filibuster which the hon. Member himself dared not apply to Garibaldi. They had followed the lead of Germany, who would not herself send troops into this hornets' nest. ["Hear, hear!"] They had placed their fleet under the command of the Italian Admiral, who now, to the shame of Italy, herself made free, was taking the lead in crushing down a far stronger case of national aspirations. What was the next step? He feared it would be the holding of the Greeks responsible for the patriotism of their brethren in Crete. It was to him a most painful thing that the House of Commons should have no opportunity up to the present time of pronouncing upon all these facts. ["Hear, hear!"]

*SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall) said that, as usual, the right hon. Gentleman had given the House very bad history. He told them that the Government of Lord Beaconsfield was defeated in 1880 in consequence of its Eastern policy. The Government of Lord Beaconsfield was defeated for many reasons, but mainly because of the unfortunate condition of trade in this country. [*Laughter.*] Would anyone deny that if Lord Beaconsfield had gone to the country in 1878, after his triumphant return from Berlin, he would have been returned with an overwhelming majority? The second bit of bad history was comparing Garibaldi's expedition with the expedition of the Greeks to Crete. The Cretans were sure of autonomy before the Greeks went to Crete. They went there, not on behalf of Cretan freedom, but to prevent Cretan autonomy. ["No!"] The great factor which hon. Gentlemen ignored was that there were 70,000 Mussulmans driven from their homes by the Cretan insurgents, whose lives and honour depended absolutely on the protection of the Great Powers. The hon. Gentleman opposite, who had advocated the mutilation of cattle and boycotting, was the last man who ought to interpose—[*Loud Irish cries of* "Order!" *and* "Withdraw!"]

MR. T. M. HEALY: I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether it is in order for the hon. Member to impute to the hon. Gentleman the Member for East Mayo that he has advocated the mutilation of cattle? [*Cheers.*]

*MR. SPEAKER: It is certainly not in order. [*Cheers, and cries of* "Withdraw, withdraw!"]

*SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: I was referring, Mr. Speaker, to records of the hon. Member's speeches that are printed in the Parnell Commission. [*Cries of* "Order!" *and* "Withdraw!"]

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member must not use expressions of that kind in reference to an hon. Member sitting in this House. [*Cheers.*]

*SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Of course, Sir, if you rule that I am not allowed to refer to speeches made by the hon. Gentleman I withdraw my statement. He was saying that the hon. Gentleman from his record was the last man who ought to pose as a Christian philanthropist in the House. [*Cheers.*] The hon. Gentleman who misrepresented the action of the British Admiral, and cast a slur on our gallant soldiers because they marched into a town where Turkish troops were stationed, to whose good conduct every officer, English and foreign, in Crete had borne witness, had not said a word of pity for these unfortunate Mussulmans. The hon. Gentleman had not a single word of pity for these Cretan Mussulmans, although in the same paper he had quoted, he might have read an account of the atrocious massacre of hundreds of them who were deluded by false promises to give up their arms, and were taken out from the mosques in which they had taken refuge and barbarously murdered. When the truth was known he did not believe the people of this country would hold the opinions of hon. Gentlemen opposite, and he sincerely hoped the House would have an opportunity of having a complete Debate on this question. When they did he was satisfied the verdict of the country would be the same as that of the House.

Mr. W. ALLAN (Gateshead) regretted that the challenge which was given by the First Lord of the Treasury was not accepted by the Leader of the Opposition, as he thought it would have saved a great deal of time and thrown much light on the subject. He endorsed the sentiments of the hon. Gentleman who had spoken in favour of this matter being thrashed out, either by a Vote of Censure, or by some other mode. He hoped their leaders would accept the challenge. If the Government wanted peace in the island the simplest way would be to order the Turkish troops out of it—["hear, hear!"]—and then call on the insurgents to lay down their arms. What was the use of wasting powder and shell, and getting a lot of barnacles on their ships when it would be so easy to settle the matter? He would ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs if the Cretans had decided for annexation to Greece why the Government prevented it? And if they wanted to give the Cretans autonomy why did they go to war with them and blockade them? Then, again, he would ask, if they were agreed upon an autonomy to Crete, what was the nature of that autonomy? Autonomy to Crete without the withdrawal of the Turkish troops would be a farce; and he would like to know what it was that prevented England—great and powerful England—to order the withdrawal of the Turkish troops from the island?

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.) said that hitherto Members had to walk by faith, but not by sight, in regard to the policy of the Government in the East of Europe. They should like to have some confirmation of their faith vouchsafed to them, and it would be greatly to their advantage that opportunity should be given to the Government to state a little more clearly than those sporadic occasions had given them the opportunity of doing what really was their position in regard to affairs in the East. They had seen very little up to the present calculated to satisfy their aspirations. There were certain things happening in the East which must be obviously distasteful to every Member of the House, and they would be glad to know what was the overwhelming necessity which compelled this country to accept those painful results. He wanted, for instance, to see the reason why the English troops in Crete should not be confined to the strictest limits in their intercourse with the Turkish troops. Considering the work the Turkish troops had recently been engaged in, and considering the peculiar circumstances in which they were placed in Crete, it would be desirable if the Government could give orders to the British officers and soldiers in Crete that they should confine their communications with the Turkish troops within those limits demanded of them in the strictest discharge of their duty. He also thought that some assurance should be given that, in following the lead of Germany and Russia, nothing would be done antagonistic to the policy which, as a free nation, this country had always pursued. The House would also like to be assured, while these tremendous sacrifices of the traditions, principles and immediate interests of this country were being made, that Germany, that great Power at whose tail we were being dragged—[*loud cheers from the Opposition Benches, and from* Mr. Dillon *in particular*]. There was no one in the House who valued the cheers of hon. Members opposite less than he did. And when he heard the hon. Member for East Mayo agreeing in these views of his he felt shaken in them; for the hon. Member belonged to a Party which expressed the hope that Her Majesty's ships should be sunk, and that Her Majesty's troops should be defeated. [*Ministerial cheers.*] But what were the convincing reasons which should reconcile the country to the present course? It had been truly said that there were many on the Ministerial side of the House who were truly anxious to be able to support Her Majesty's Government. They really believed that it would be to the advantage of the country if an opportunity could be given to the Government to explain more fully what were their hopes in calling on the country to make these great sacrifices. Because every step of the present policy could only be justified by some overwhelming public advantage. It was an absolute contradiction of the past traditions of both sides of the House in foreign policy. There might be great emergencies in which this policy was inevitable, and if it were crowned with success it would be justified;

but there was no sign of success. He hoped the hon. Member for the Rushcliffe Division would be able to persuade his leaders to give the House this Debate, and he would then deserve the thanks of Members on both sides of the House.

Mr. T. M. HEALY said that the Irish Members now had a special interest in the British Navy, for, according to the Act of Union Ireland paid about one-fifteenth of all the shells which were flung into Crete. Therefore to that extent he wished to associate himself with the inquiries to Her Majesty's Government. The Leader of the House made an observation which had considerable force from the point of view of Party tactics. The right hon. Gentleman asked the Opposition why they did not move a Vote of Censure. But there might be Gentlemen on the Opposition side of the House not willing to take part in a Vote of Censure, who wished to see the best thing done for the people of Crete, without any regard to Party advantage on one side or the other. His point was that those who spoke "On the true faith of a Christian," did not desire to see people believing in Christ and His Virgin Mother massacred as they had been by the abominable Turks. Last year he put questions to the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs relative to the burning of priests in their own churches in Crete, on pyres made of pictures torn from these churches. The First Lord of the Treasury had said that night that the Great Powers—and England foremost among them—were willing to give the Cretans autonomy. He did not know any Greek himself, but he understood one word —"autonomy." [*Laughter and* "hear, hear!"] But the Cretans understood Greek if he did not, and when they were told they would have autonomy they would understand it. He himself understood it as meaning the withdrawal of Turkish troops from the island. [*Cheers.*] Then why should the British Government be assisting to maintain the Turkish garrison in their blockhouses—when *ex hypothesi* the whole of the Turks must be cleared out. When was autonomy to begin—after the insurgents had been humiliated by defeat? He believed that the policy of the Government, like other articles we consumed in this country, was "made in Germany." [*Cheers.*] Last year the German Emperor sent his portrait to the Sultan. Although the Government admitted that it was to the German policy they were "tuning up," he believed they were really anxious for the welfare of the Cretans. Yet they allowed the German Emperor, or as Mr. Gladstone, with his splendid courage, called him, "this foolish young man," to dominate the policy that had been pursued in the East. ["Hear, hear!"] He believed the Government were no more in favour of Turkish rule in Crete than he was in favour of English rule in Ireland. He believed they were as much convinced it was a nuisance, as he believed their rule in Ireland to be so. The Government called all this the Concert of the Powers. The only evidence they had of that Concert was the hiss of the shells as they fell in the Christian camp. What a time they were from the battle of Lepanto, when all Europe rejoiced at the defeat of Turkish power! Now English troops were received with the cheers of the Turks, and sent shells into the blockhouses when the Cretans happened to take them. He was only concerned for the lives and liberties of this poor agricultural people, and he said to the Government—make the Turks withdraw first, and then settle whether it was to be autonomy or junction with Greece.

Mr. ROBERT PIERPOINT (Warrington) protested against the sympathy of the Opposition being limited to the Christian population, while the Mussulmans, who were in the proportion of about one to four of the Christian population, were designated as Turks. There was nothing at all strange that when an English force landed at Canea it should be welcomed by the Turkish soldiers and the other occupying forces. That was perfectly natural, because the population of Canea was nearly entirely Mussulman. As far as he knew of the island there was nothing whatever, if there could only be a strong Government at the head of affairs, to prevent the Mussulmans and Christians living together in perfect peace and amity. But as long as there was a force of insurgents in the island, all of them Christian insurgents, who had been committing just as great cruelties on the Mussulmans as ever the Mussulmans of the island had committed on the Christians, it was necessary that there should be some force to prevent the Mussulmans from being treated in the manner in which the insurgents would undoubtedly treat them if they had the power. There was nothing to prevent the two religions of the same race living together in perfect amity. In the Island of Cyprus the population was practically in the same proportion as the Mussulmans to the Christians in Crete, but in Cyprus there was a strong Government, and thus the two religions were enabled to live in perfect peace and amity, and there was no sign of war between the two races. If the country and the House would have patience and wait, they would find that the peace of Europe would be preserved by the Concert of Europe, and that a strong Government would be established in Crete. Surely it was worth while to have patience and to believe that the best was being tried, when the peace of the whole world was endangered for an island with a population only as large as that of one of our moderately large towns.

Question put, "That '£10,631,218' stand part of the Resolution."

The House divided:—Ayes, 163; Noes, 60.—(Division List, No. 152.)

Resolution agreed to.

DANGEROUS PERFORMANCES BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

METROPOLITAN AND OTHER POLICE COURTS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

PATENT OFFICE EXTENSION BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

PUBLIC OFFICES (WHITEHALL) SITE BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

PUBLIC HEALTH (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Second Reading [22nd March] further adjourned till Thursday.

MERCHANT SHIPPING (UNDERMANNINNG) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

FOREIGN PRISON MADE GOODS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

BERRIEW SCHOOL BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

KINGSTOWN HARBOUR ROADS TRANSFER BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

LAW OF EVIDENCE (CRIMINAL CASES) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ALDERSHOT AND FARNBOROUGH) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

ARCHDEACONRY OF CORNWALL BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

TRUSTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY (TRANSFER OF PATRONAGE) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

RAILWAY ASSESSORS (SCOTLAND) SUPERANNUATION BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

SUPPLY.

Committee deferred till Wednesday.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Committee deferred till Wednesday.

WAREHOUSEMEN'S CERTIFICATES BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday 3rd May.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tomorrow.

INDUSTRIES (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tomorrow.

POOR LAW OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

POOR LAW OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION ACT (1896) AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday 6th April.

PLUMBERS' REGISTRATION BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Friday 30th April.

STEAM ENGINES AND BOILERS (PERSONS IN CHARGE) BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Motion for Committal to Standing Committee on Trade, etc., [17th February] further adjourned till Thursday.

HIGHWAYS BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday.

COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEAL BILL.

Adjourned Debate on Motion for Committal to Select Committee [24th March] further adjourned till Thursday.

COUNTY GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tomorrow.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS (IRELAND) (WOMEN) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tomorrow.

LICENSING EXEMPTION (HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT) BILL.

Second Reading deferred till Tomorrow.

MOTION.

CANALS AND NAVIGABLE RIVERS (IRELAND).

Bill to amend the Law relating to Canals and Navigable Rivers in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. J. P. Farrell, Mr. Macaleese, Mr. Donal Sullivan, Mr. Tuite, and Mr. Field; presented accordingly, and Read the First time; to be Read a Second time upon Thursday 29th April, and to be printed.—[Bill 180.]

And, it being after One of the clock, Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put.

House Adjourned at Ten Minutes before Two o'Clock.

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(AUTHORISED EDITION).

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THIRD VOLUME OF SESSION 1897.

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Bills Read 1^a, 1°, 2^a, 2°, 3^a, 3°.	Read the First, Second, or Third Time.
1R., 2R., 3R.	Speech delivered on First, Second, or Third Reading.
Adj.	Adjourned.
A.	Answer.
c.	Commons.
Com.	Committee.
com.	Committed.
Intro.	Introduction.
l.	Lords.
Obj.	Objections.
Obs.	Observations.
Pres.	Presented.
Q.	Question.
Rep.	Reported.
R.P.	Report Progress.
Reso.	Resolutions.

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Vice President—Sir JOHN E. GORST

- *Ascension Day, West Ham School Board, Q.* Lord Balcarres; *A.* Sir J. Gorst *Mar* 23, 1173
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  - *Playgrounds, Q.* Colonel Dalbiac; *A.* Sir J. Gorst *Mar* 22, 1110
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- *Building Grants, Elementary Schools, Q.* Mr. F. A. Channing; *A.* Sir J. Gorst *Mar* 29, 1566
- *Children's Metropolitan Asylums Board, Q.* Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Mr. T. W. Russell *Mar* 12, 574. *Q.* Mr. E. Flower; *A.* Mr. T. W. Russell *Mar* 16, 762. *Qs.* Mr. H. H. Bemrose, Mr. E. Flower, Mr. T. Lough; *As.* Mr. H. Chaplin *Mar* 23, 1182
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- *Necessitous Board Schools Bill, Q.* Mr. J. H. Roberts; *A.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 23, 1193
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HARDY, Mr. LAURENCE, *Kent, Ashford*
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HIGGINS, Mr. FREDERICK PLATT- (see PLATT-HIGGINS)

HOBHOUSE, Mr. H., *Somerset, E.*
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HOGAN, Mr. J. F., *Tipperary, Mid*
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Under Secretary of State—Mr. JESSE COLLINGS

- *Aldershot Military Prison*, Q. Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 16, 749
- *Betting-houses Act, Hawke* v. *Dunn*, Q. Sir W. Lawson; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 16, 758
- *Betting on Racecourses*, Qs. Mr. E. H. Pickersgill, Mr. J. Lowther; *As.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 18, 948 Q. Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 25, 1296
- *Bishopric of St. David's*, Qs. Mr. Bryn Roberts; *As.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 19, 1027
- *Cab Drivers, Scotland Yard*, Q. Captain Norton; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 25, 1324
- *Checkweigher, Mines Regulation Act 1887*, Q. Mr. B. Pickard; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 11, 504
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  - *Dartmoor*, Q. Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 16, 753
  - *Warders, Instruction of*, Q. Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 29, 1569
- *Convicts under Sentence*, Qs. Mr. E. H. Pickersgill, Mr. A. O'Connor; *As.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 15, 658
- *Cotton Cloth Factories Act*, Q. Mr. R. Ascroft; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 9, 293
- *County Court, Marylebone*, Q. Mr. S. Woods; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 29, 1563
- *Dartmoor Convict Prison*, Q. Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 16, 753
- *Domestic Servants' Characters*, Q. Mr. S. Woods; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 29, 1564
- *Employers' Liability Act, East Lancashire Paper Mill Company*, Q. Colonel Mellor; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 16, 768
- *Experiments on Living Animals*, Qs. Mr. Swift MacNeill; *As.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 12, 563; *Mar* 23, 1180
- *Factory Act Prosecutions, Low Moor*, Qs. Sir C. Dilke; *As.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 15, 668; *Mar* 19, 1025
- *Insane, Suicide Return*, Q. Mr. W. J. Corbet; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 8, 195
- *Lunacy, England and Wales*, Q. Mr. H. Hobhouse; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 15, 680
- *Malmesbury Petty Sessions*, Q. Mr. H. Labouchere; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 12, 561
- *Marylebone County Court*, Q. Mr. S. Woods; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 29, 1563
- *Metropolitan Police*
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  - *Inspector Fox*, Q. Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 15, 676
  - *Regulations*, Qs. Mr. E. H. Pickersgill, Captain Norton; *As.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 22, 1104
- *Police*
  - *Court, Thames*, Q. Mr. C. J. Darling; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 25, 1302
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  - *Supervision*, Qs. Captain Pirie; *As.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 16, 760; *Mar* 29, 1566
- *Prisoners Awaiting Trial*, Q. Captain Pirie; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 16, 760
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  - *Aldershot Military*, Q. Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 16, 749
  - *Clerks*, Q. Mr. F. Platt-Higgins; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 29, 1550
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    - *Annual Conference*, Q. Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 18, 915
    - *New Rules*, Q. Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 19, 1020
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    - *Instruction of*, Q. Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 29, 1569
    - *Punishment of*, Q. Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 18, 915
- *Private Asylums*, Q. Mr. W. Field; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 8, 187
- *Queen's Reign, Jubilee Procession*, *Qs.* Sir J. T. Brunner, Mr. C. J. Darling; [Mr. Speaker;] *As.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 23, 1184. *Qs.* Mr. C. J. Darling, Mr. H. E. Kearley, Mr. J. C. Williams, Mr. Gibson Bowles; *As.* Sir Matthew White Ridley, Mr. Akers-Douglas *Mar* 25, 1302
- *Reformatories for Inebriates*, Q. Mr. H. Hobhouse; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 15, 663
- *Scotland Yard, Cab Drivers*, Q. Captain Norton; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 25, 1324
- *Shuttle Guards*, Q. Sir C. Dilke; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 23, 1170
- *Thames Police Court*, Q. Mr. C. J. Darling; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 25, 1302
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Secretary of State—Lord G. HAMILTON
Under Secretary of State—Earl of ONSLOW

- *Audit Department, India Office*, Q. Mr. W. Hazell; *A.* Lord G. Hamilton *Mar* 29, 1572
- *Behar Opium Agency*, Q. Mr. A. Pease; *A.* Lord G. Hamilton *Mar* 18, 935
- *British Troops in, Health of*, *Qs.* Captain Norton, Major Rasch; *As.* Lord G. Hamilton, Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 18, 940. Q. Major Rasch; *A.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 22, 1126. *Qs.* Sir J. Fergusson, General Laurie, Major Rasch; *As.* Lord G. Hamilton, Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1568
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- *Christian Churches in*, *Qs.* Mr. J. H. Roberts, Mr. J. C. Williams; *As.* Lord G. Hamilton *Mar* 22, 1115
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  - *Russian Assistance*, Q. Mr. Bhownaggree; *A.* Mr. Curzon *Mar* 12, 568
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IRELAND

Lord Lieutenant—Earl CADOGAN
Chief Secretary—Mr. G. W. BALFOUR
Lord Chancellor—Lord ASHBOURNE
Attorney General—Mr. J. ATKINSON
Solicitor General—Mr. W. KENNY

Agricultural Prices, Q. Mr. M. McCartan; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1560
Agricultural Rating Act 1896 (Extension to Ireland), Qs. Mr. E. H. Carson, Mr. T. Lough; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 25, 1316. *Qs.* Mr. D. Macaleese, Mr. E. H. Carson; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 25, 1323. *Q.* Mr. J. Daly; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 26, 1430
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Army Contracts, Q. Mr. M. J. Flavin; *A.* Mr. Brodrick *Mar* 19, 1029
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  Garvagh Estate, Qs. Mr. S. Young, Mr. J. C. Flynn; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 12, 565
  Labourers' Cottages, Q. Mr. S. Young; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 26, 1433
  Light Railway, Leitrim and, Q. Mr. J. P. Farrell; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 8, 202
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  Post Office, Bogeskey, Q. Mr. S. Young; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 25, 1299
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  Doneraile Estate, Qs. Mr. J. C. Flynn; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 15, 670
  Post Office, Q. Mr. M. Healy; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 12, 572. *Q.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 25, 1308
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      - *Fermanagh and Monaghan, Q.* Mr. D. Macaleese; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 23, 1192
    - *Sub-Sheriffs, and, Q.* Mr. J. Tully; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 26, 1440
  - *Court of Conscience, Cork, Qs.* Mr. Vesey Knox, Mr. W. Johnston; [Mr. Speaker;] *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1557
  - *Custom House, Queenstown, Q.* Captain Donelan; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 19, 1032
  - *Daunt's Rock Lightship, Qs.* Mr. M. Healy; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 11, 500
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    - *Ballinrobe, Q.* Mr. M. Davitt; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 19, 1024
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  - *Donegal, Coaling Station, Lough Swilly, Q.* Mr. T. B. Curran; *A.* Mr. G. J. Goschen *Mar* 18, 939
  - *Down County Court Judgeship, Qs.* Mr. P. O'Brien; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 12, 572; *Mar* 15, 679; *Mar* 16, 756
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    - *Female Telegraph Learners, Q.* Mr. J. L. Carew; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 12, 561. *Q.* Mr. D. Macaleese; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 16, 756
    - *Grangegorman Prison, Qs.* Mr. J. L. Carew; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 5, 50; *Mar* 9, 291
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    - *Cork*
      - *Doneraile, Qs.* Mr. J. C. Flynn; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 15, 670
      - *White, Sale of, Qs.* Mr. J. Gilhooly; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 18, 924; *Mar* 22, 1124
    - *Fermanagh School, Qs.* Mr. P. C. Doogan; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 12, 567; *Mar* 15, 659
    - *Garvagh, Cavan, Qs.* Mr. S. Young, Mr. J. C. Flynn; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 12, 565

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    - *Kerry*
      - *Fitzgerald, Q.* Mr. M. J. Flavin; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 22, 1116
      - *Receivers, Q.* Mr. M. J. Flavin; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 22, 1125
      - *Warden, Q.* Mr. J. Dillon; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 11, 488
    - *Monaghan*
      - *Coote, Q.* Mr. D. Macaleese; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 15, 660
      - *M'Math, Q.* Mr. J. Daly; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 9, 290
    - *Return, Ireland, Qs.* Mr. M. Healy; *As.* Mr. J. Atkinson *Mar* 9, 302
  - *Evicted*
    - *Farms, Meeting at Cahir, Qs.* Colonel Saunderson, Mr. J. Morley, Mr. J. Dillon, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Swift MacNeill; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 9, 287
    - *Tenants*
      - *Cavan, Q.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 25, 1306
      - *Monaghan, Q.* Mr. J. Daly; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 26, 1432
  - *Fair Rents*
    - *Applications*
      - *Cavan, Q.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 16, 751
      - *Ireland, Qs.* Mr. J. P. Farrell, Mr. E. H. Carson, Mr. J. C. Flynn, Dr. R. Ambrose, Mr. J. Dillon, Mr. J. Daly; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 18, 919
      - *Monaghan, Q.* Mr. J. Daly; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 5, 51
    - *Schedule of Particulars, Qs.* Colonel Saunderson, Mr. T. M. Healy; [Mr. Speaker;] *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 9, 303
  - *Female Telegraph Learners, Dublin, Q.* Mr. J. L. Carew; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 12, 561. *Q.* Mr. D. Macaleese; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 16, 756
  - *Fermanagh*
    - *Land Sub-Commission, Q.* Mr. D. Macaleese, Mr. M. Healy; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 11, 497
    - *Monaghan and, County Court Judge, Q.* Mr. D. Macaleese; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 23, 1192
    - *School Estate, Qs.* Mr. P. C. Doogan; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 12, 567; *Mar* 15, 659
  - *Financial Relations Between Great Britain and Ireland, Q.* Mr. J. Dillon; *A.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 18, 951. *Q.* Mr. E. Robertson; *A.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 25, 1327 (For Debate see that Title)
  - *Financial Relations Commission (Ireland)* (see that Title)
  - *Flax-growing, Q.* Mr. J. Daly; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 15, 655
  - *Freemasons, Q.* Mr. M. Austin; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 5, 56
  - *Galway*
    - *Clanricarde Estate, Q.* Mr. John Roche; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 22, 1122
    - *Paupers, Qs.* Mr. D. Kilbride, Mr. W. O'Malley; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 16, 750

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- *Galway*—cont.
  - *Processes for Rent*, *Qs.* Mr. D. Kilbride, Mr. W. O'Malley; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 16, 749
- *Grangegorman Prison*, *Qs.* Mr. J. L. Carew; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 5, 50; *Mar* 9, 291
- *Gun Licence, Ballybunion, Kerry*, *Q.* Mr. M. J. Flavin; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 26, 1432
- *Harbour Commissioners, Wicklow*, *Q.* Mr. J. L. Carew; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 19, 1030
- *Higher Education*, *Q.* Mr. J. Dillon; *A.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 15, 682
- *Industrial Schools*, *Q.* Mr. R. McGhee; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1551
- *Intermediate Examinations*, *Qs.* Mr. M. J. Flavin; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 15, 655; *Mar* 18, 935
- *Irish Model Schools Department*, *Q.* Mr. T. M. Healy; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1537
- *Judges*
  - *County Court*
    - *Appointment of*, *Qs.* Mr. P. O'Brien; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 11, 502
    - *Down*, *Qs.* Mr. P. O'Brien; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 12, 572; *Mar* 15, 679; *Mar* 16, 756
    - *Fermanagh and Monaghan*, *Q.* Mr. D. Macaleese; *A* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 23, 1192
  - *Military Guard, Cork Assizes*, *Qs.* Mr. Swift MacNeill, Mr. E. H. Carson; *As.* Mr. Hanbury, Mr. J. Atkinson *Mar* 23, 1190 (For Debate see Title IRISH JUDGES AND MILITARY GUARDS, IRELAND)
- *Kerry*
  - *Estate Receivers*, *Q.* Mr. M. J. Flavin; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 22, 1125
  - *Fitzgerald Estate*, *Q.* Mr. M. J. Flavin; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 22, 1116
  - *Gun Licence, Ballybunion*, *Q.* Mr. M. J. Flavin; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 26, 1432
  - *Warden Estate*, *Q.* Mr. J. Dillon; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 11, 488
- *Kilkenny Burgess Roll*, *Qs.* Mr. P. O'Brien, Mr. J. Lowther; [Mr. Speaker;] *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 23, 1192
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  - *Cottages*
    - *Callan Board of Guardians*, *Q.* Mr. P. O'Brien; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1563
    - *Cavan*, *Q.* Mr. S. Young; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 26, 1433
  - *Dwellings, Longford*, *Q.* Mr. A. O'Connor; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 8, 206
- *Land Commission*
  - *Clon'ygora Tenants*, *Q.* Mr. T. M. Healy; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 15, 680
  - *Fair Rents*, *Qs.* Mr. E. H. Carson, Mr. D. Macaleese; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 8, 192
  - *Longford, Reductions of Rent*, *Q.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 25, 1306
  - *Officers*, *Qs.* General McCalmont, Mr. Arnold-Forster, Mr. J. C. Flynn, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. J. Lowther, Mr. E. H. Carson; [Mr. Speaker;] *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1540

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- *Land Commission*—cont.
  - *Reductions of Rent*, *Qs.* Sir J. Colomb, Mr. M. J. Flavin, Mr. E. H. Carson; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 23, 1174
  - *Rules*, *Q.* Mr. J. Dillon; *A.* Mr. J. Atkinson *Mar* 5, 52
  - *Sale of Tenancies*, *Q.* Mr. Vesey Knox; *A.* Mr. J. Atkinson *Mar* 22, 1121
  - *Supply*, *Qs.* Mr. E. H. Carson, Mr. J. C. Flynn; *As.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 19, 1036
- *Land Law (Ireland) Act 1881* (see that Title)
- *Land Law (Ireland) Act 1881 (Irish Land Commission Rules)* (see that Title)
- *Land Law (Ireland) Act 1896, Rules*, *Q.* Mr. J. Dillon; *A.* Mr. J. Atkinson *Mar* 5, 52
- *Land*
  - *Sub-Commission*
    - *Connaught*, *Q.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 9, 287
    - *Fermanagh and Monaghan*, *Qs.* Mr. D. Macaleese, Mr. M. Healy; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 11, 497
    - *Omagh*, *Q.* Mr. D. Macaleese; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 16, 753. *Qs.* Mr. G. Murnaghan, Mr. E. H. Carson; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 19, 1035
  - *Valuation*, *Qs.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 9, 286; *Mar* 18, 927
- *Light Railways, Cavan and Leitrim*, *Q.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 8, 202
- *Limerick, Roxborough Schools*, *Q.* Mr. T. M. Healy; *A.* Mr. J. Atkinson *Mar* 29, 1539
- *Loan Fund*
  - *Acts*, *Q.* Mr. Swift MacNeill; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 5, 53
  - *Societies*, *Q.* Mr. Swift MacNeill; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 11, 503. *Q.* Dr. McDonnell; *A.* Mr. J. Atkinson *Mar* 19, 1031. *Qs.* Dr. McDonnell, Mr. Vesey Knox; *As.* Mr. J. Atkinson *Mar* 23, 1179
- *Longford*
  - *Labourers' Dwellings*, *Q.* Mr. A. O'Connor; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 8, 206
  - *Land Commision, Reduction of Rent*, *Q.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 25, 1306
  - *Post Office, Moate-Farrell*, *Q.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 8, 202
- *Lough Swilly*
  - *Coaling Station, Donegal*, *Q.* Mr. T. B. Curran; *As.* Mr. G. J. Goschen *Mar* 18, 939
  - *Railway Company*, *Q.* Mr. P. O'Brien; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 9, 296
- *Magistracy*
  - *Meath and Cavan*, *Q.* Mr. S. Young; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 25, 1299
  - *Warden (Mr.)*, *Qs.* Mr. D. Kilbride; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 12, 566
- *Mail Service*, *Qs.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *As.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 5, 57. *Q.* Mr. Swift MacNeill; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 8, 204. *Q.* Mr. M. Healy; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 9, 302. *Qs.* Mr. J. Gilhooly, Mr. M. Healy; *As.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 11, 496. *Qs.* Captain Donelan, Mr. Swift MacNeill, Mr. M. Healy, Mr. S. Young; *As.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 12, 559. *Qs.* Mr. G. Murnaghan, Mr. M. J. Flavin, Captain Donelan; *As.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 18, 936. *Q.* Mr. J. Daly;

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A. Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 19, 1026. *Q.* Mr. P. J. O'Brien; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 22, 1115. *Q.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 23, 1178. *Q.* Mr. J. Dillon; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 25, 1307. *Q.* Mr. P. O'Brien; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 26, 1436

Mails, Transhipment of, Kingstown and Holyhead, Qs. Mr. M. Healy, Mr. T. M. Healy; *As.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 11, 502. *Qs.* Mr. M. Healy; *As.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 12, 573

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Ballinrobe, Q. Mr. M. Davitt; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 19, 1024

Claremorris, Q. Mr. M. Davitt; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 5, 57

Evicted Farms, Meeting at Cahir, Qs. Colonel Saunderson, Mr. J. Morley, Mr. J. Dillon, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Swift MacNeill; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 9, 287

Meeting Prohibited, Qs. Mr. J. Dillon; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 25, 1327. *Qs.* Mr. J. Dillon, Captain Donelan; [Mr. Speaker;] *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 26, 1436

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Blackshades Railway and Canal Bridge, Q. Mr. J. L. Carew; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 9, 292

Magistracy, Cavan, and, Q. Mr. S. Young; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 25, 1299

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Assizes, Diminution of Crime, Q. Mr. J. Daly; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 11, 488

Coote Estate, Q. Mr. D. Macaleese; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 15, 660

County Court Judge, Q. Mr. D. Macaleese; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 23, 1192

Evicted Tenants, Q. Mr. J. Daly; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 26, 1432

Fair Rent Applications, Q. Mr. J. Daly; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 5, 51

Land Sub-Commission, Qs. Mr. D. Macaleese, Mr. M. Healy; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 11, 497

M'Math Estate, Q. Mr. J. Daly; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 9, 290

Police Protection, Dromod, Q. Mr. J. Daly; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1549

Mullingar Union, Outdoor Relief, Q. Mr. J. Tully; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 25, 1313

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Board, Qs. Mr. P. O'Brien, Mr. T. Harrington, Mr. W. Johnston; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 18, 930

School Teachers

Bonuses, Q. Mr. T. Harrington; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 18, 934

Residual Grant, Q. Mr. P. A. M'Hugh; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 11, 489

Omagh, Land Sub-Commissioners, Q. Mr. D. Macaleese; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 16, 753. *Qs.* Mr. G. Murnaghan, Mr. E. H. Carson; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 19, 1035

Parsonstown and Portumna Railway, Qs. Mr. W. Field, Mr. R. M. Dane; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1551

Paupers, Galway, Qs. Mr. D. Kilbride, Mr. W. O'Malley; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 16, 750

Police Protection

Cavan, Qs. Mr. J. P. Farrell; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 18, 914

Dromod, Monaghan, Q. Mr. J. Daly; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1549

Poor Law and Municipal Franchise, Q. Mr. T. Harrington; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 18, 941

Poor Relief (Ireland) Bill, Q. Mr. D. Macaleese; *A* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 15, 670

Postal Facilities, Queen's County, Q. Mr. A. O'Connor; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 29, 1547

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Bogeskey, Cavan, Q. Mr. S. Young; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 25, 1299

Clonmel, Q. Mr. T. J. Condon; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 18, 935

Cork, Q. Mr. M. Healy; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 12, 572. *Q.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 25, 1308

Moate-Farrell, Longford, Q. Mr. J. P. Farrell; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 8, 202

Thurles, Tipperary, Q. Mr. J. F. Hogan; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 22, 1114

Prison, Grangegorman, Qs. Mr. J. L. Carew; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 5, 50; *Mar* 9, 291

Processes for Rent, Galway, Qs. Mr. D. Kilbride, Mr. W. O'Malley; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 16, 749

Public

Loans, Q. Mr. J. Pinkerton; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 29, 1548

Works, Supply of Furniture, Q. Mr. J. Dillon; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 22, 1121

Queen's County, Postal Facilities, Q. Mr. A. O'Connor; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 29, 1547

Queenstown Custom House, Q. Captain Donelan; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 19, 1032

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Blackshades and Canal Bridge, Meath, Q. Mr. J. L. Carew; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 9, 292

Cavan, Qs. Mr. J. P. Farrell; *As.* Mr. Hanbury, Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 26, 1431

Cavan and Leitrim Light, Q. Mr. J. P. Farrell; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 8, 202

Lough Swilly Company, Q. Mr. P. O'Brien; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 9, 296

Parsonstown and Portumna, Qs. Mr. W. Field, Mr. R. M. Dane; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1551

Waterford and Limerick, Qs. Mr. M. J. Flavin; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 12, 557

Rathdown Union Workhouse, Q. Mr. J. J. Clancy; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 12, 571

Rent Decrees, Q. Mr. J. Daly; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 19, 1032

Richmond Lunatic Asylum, Dublin, Qs. Mr. J. L. Carew, Mr. E. H. Carson; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 18, 943

Road Construction, Q. Mr. John Roche; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 19, 1023

Rosscarberry Convent, Q. Mr. D. Macaleese; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 15, 669

Roxborough Schools, Q. Mr. T. M. Healy; *A.* Mr. J. Atkinson *Mar* 29, 1539

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- *Royal Irish Constabulary*
  - *County Inspectors, Qs.* Mr. J. Daly, Mr. J. Tully; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 25, 1301. *Qs.* Mr. J. P. Farrell, Mr. J. Tully; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1546
  - *Force Fund, Qs.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 9, 286; *Mar* 18, 928
- *Schools*
  - *Attendance Committees, Q.* Mr. J. O'Connor; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1569
  - *Industrial, Q.* Mr. R. McGhee; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1551
  - *Model Department, Q.* Mr. T. M. Healy; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1537
  - *National*
    - *Teachers*
      - *Bonuses, Q.* Mr. T. Harrington; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 18, 934
      - *Residual Grant, Q.* Mr. P. A. M'Hugh; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 11, 489
    - *Workmistresses, Qs.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 8, 202; *Mar* 12, 554; *Mar* 23, 1179
  - *Roxborough, Limerick, Q.* Mr. T. M. Healy; *A.* Mr. J. Atkinson *Mar* 29, 1539
- *Science and Art*
  - *Education, Qs.* Mr. J. P. Farrell, Mr. G. Murnaghan; *As.* Sir J. Gorst *Mar* 15, 666
  - *Grant, Qs.* Mr. G. Murnaghan, Mr. Vesey Knox; *As.* Sir J. Gorst *Mar* 29, 1570
- *Scottish Provident Assurance Company, Q.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 26, 1433
- *Shannon Salmon Fishery, Qs.* Mr. James Roche, Captain Donelan; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 8, 206
- *Suck Drainage Award, Qs.* Mr. J. O'Kelly, Mr. D. Kilbride; *As.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 8, 186. *Qs.* Mr. D. Kilbride, Mr. John Roche; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour, Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 15, 661. *Q.* Mr. D. Kilbride; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 19, 1031
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  - *Letter Delivery, Lucan, Dublin Q.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 11, 484
  - *Post, Tipperary, Q.* Mr. J. F. Hogan; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 15, 665
- *Supply: Irish Land Commission, Qs.* Mr. E. H. Carson, Mr. J. C. Flynn; *As.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 19, 1036
- *Telegraph*
  - *Female Learners, Dublin, Q.* Mr. J. L. Carew; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 12, 561. *Q.* Mr. D. Macaleese; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 16, 756
  - *Station, Drinagh, Cork, Q.* Mr. J. Gilhooly; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 11, 494
- *Tipperary*
  - *Post Office, Thurles, Q.* Mr. J. F. Hogan; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 22, 1114
  - *Sunday Post, Q.* Mr. J. F. Hogan; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 15, 665
- *Transhipment of Mails, Kingstown and Holyhead, Qs.* Mr. M. Healy, Mr. T. M. Healy; *As.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 11, 502. *Q.* Mr. M. Healy; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 12, 573

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- *Trawling in Bantry Bay, Q.* Mr. J. Gilhooly; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 18, 924
- *Treason-felony Prisoners, Qs.* Mr. W. Field, Mr. M. McCartan; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1545
- *Tunnel, Ireland and Scotland, Q.* Mr. Arnold-Forster; *A.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 22, 1125
- *Union*
  - *Mullingar, Out-door Relief, Q.* Mr. J. Tully; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 25, 1313
  - *Workhouse*
    - *Armagh, Qs.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1571
    - *Rathdown, Q.* Mr. J. J. Clancy; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 12, 571
- *Valuation and Boundary Survey, Qs.* Mr. J. Daly; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 22, 1107
- *Waterford and Limerick Railway, Qs.* Mr. M. J. Flavin; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 12, 557
- *Wicklow*
  - *Harbour Commissioners, Q.* Mr. J. L. Carew; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 19, 1030
  - *Pier, Q.* Mr. J. L. Carew; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 16, 757
- *Workhouse*
  - *Armagh Union, Qs.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1571
  - *Rathdown Union, Q.* Mr. J. J. Clancy; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 12, 571
- *Workmistresses, Irish National Schools, Qs.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 8, 202; *Mar* 12, 554; *Mar* 23, 1179

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- *l.* Pres., Marquess of Salisbury; Read 1ª *Mar* 12, 554
- 2R., Marquess of Salisbury *Mar* 18, 889
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- In Com., Rep. without Amendt.; Standing Com. negatived *Mar* 19, 1019
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JEBB, Mr. R. C., *Cambridge University*
- Clerical Incomes, Taxation *Mar* 23, 1218
- Voluntary Schools Bill, In Com. *Mar* 15, 700, 702; *Mar* 17, 884; 3R. *Mar* 25, 1379

JEFFREYS, Mr. A. F., *Hants, Basingstoke*
- Army Equipment *Mar* 5, 54, 55
- Clerical Incomes, Taxation *Mar* 23, 1215
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JESSEL, Captain H. M., *St. Pancras, S.*
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- Artillery and Cavalry Horses *Mar* 26, 1434
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- Supply: £10,631,218 for Vote on Account *Mar* 26, 1496
- Voluntary Schools Bill, In Com. *Mar* 18, 981, 982

JONES, Major E. PRYCE- (see PRYCE-JONES)

JONES, Mr. D. BRYNMOR, *Swansea District*
- Court of Criminal Appeal Bill, 2R. *Mar* 24, 1257
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JONES, Mr. L. ATHERLEY- (see ATHERLEY-JONES)

Juries Detention Bill

c. Considered in Com. and Rep. without Amendt. *Mar* 9, 375
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KEARLEY, Mr. H. E., *Devonport*
- Adulteration, Food Products *Mar* 9, 305
- Army (Annual) Bill, 2R. *Mar* 18, 1005, 1006
- Business of the House *Mar* 18, 1008
- Marine Garrison in Naval Bases *Mar* 5, 138, 139
- Military Works Bill, In Com. *Mar* 18, 1003
- Navy Estimates
  - £10,600 for Martial Law *Mar* 19, 1064
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  - £1,384,600 for Victualling and Clothing *Mar* 19, 1059
- Queen's Reign, Jubilee Procession, Members of Parliament *Mar* 18, 947; *Mar* 25, 1303
- Royal Patriotic Fund *Mar* 9, 305; *Mar* 18, 926
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KENNAWAY, Right Hon. Sir JOHN H., Bart., *Devonshire, Honiton*
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KENNY, MR. W. (Solicitor General for Ireland), *Dublin, St. Stephen's Green*
- Educational Endowments (Ireland) Act *Mar* 8, 264

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Kent Water (Purchase) Bill

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KILBRIDE, Mr. D., *Galway, N.*
- Galway
  - Paupers *Mar* 16, 750
  - Processes for Rent *Mar* 16, 749
- Magistracy, Ireland (Mr. Warden) *Mar* 12, 566, 567
- Suck Drainage Award *Mar* 8, 186; *Mar* 15, 661, 663; *Mar* 19, 1031

KIMBERLEY, Earl of
- Crete *Mar* 15, 649; *Mar* 16, 745
- Integrity of the Ottoman Empire *Mar* 19, 1009, 1014, 1018
- Land Law (Ireland) Act 1881 *Mar* 18, 912
- Parliamentary Franchise (Women) Bill, 2R. *Mar* 8, 155
- Working Men's Dwellings Bill, 2R. *Mar* 9, 271

Kingstown Harbour Roads Transfer Bill

c. Intro., Mr. Hanbury; Read 1° *Mar* 9, 373

KNOX, Mr. E. F. VESEY, *Londonderry City*
- Court of Conscience, Cork *Mar* 29, 1557
- Educational Endowments (Ireland) Act *Mar* 8, 266, 267, 268
- Land Commission, Sale of Tenancies *Mar* 22, 1121
- Loan Fund Societies, Ireland *Mar* 23, 1180
- Local Loans *Mar* 23, 1187
- Military Works Bill, In Com. *Mar* 22, 1129, 1130
- Post Office Establishments *Mar* 29, 1562
- Science and Art Grant, Ireland *Mar* 29, 1570, 1571
- Telegrams, Alleged Bogus, Ireland *Mar* 23, 1187

LABOUCHERE, Mr. HENRY, *Northampton*
- Crete *Mar* 9, 301; *Mar* 11, 508
- Malmesbury Petty Sessions *Mar* 12, 561
- Navy Estimates: £4,696,000 for Wages, etc. *Mar* 19, 1044
- Supply: £10,631,218 for Vote on Account *Mar* 26, 1521, 1523

LABOUR QUESTIONS, ETC.

Army Clothing Department, *Qs.* Captain Norton, Mr. J. Dillon, Mr. A. O'Connor; *As.* Mr. Powell-Williams *Mar* 25, 1304
Cab Drivers, Scotland Yard, *Q.* Captain Norton; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 25, 1324
Checkweigher, Mines Regulation Act 1887, *Q.* Mr. B. Pickard; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 11, 504. *Q.* Mr. S. Woods; *A.* Sir R. Webster *Mar* 16, 763
Coopers, Navy, *Qs.* Sir J. Haslett, Mr. Arnold-Forster; *As.* Mr. Macartney *Mar* 12, 555
Cotton Cloth Factories Act, *Q.* Mr. R. Ascroft; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 9, 293
Domestic Servants' Characters, *Q.* Mr. S. Woods; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 29, 1564
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Engineering Trade Dispute, *Q.* Mr. E. Robertson; *A.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 18, 951
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  Bradford, *Q.* Sir C. Dilke; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 19, 1025
  Low Moor, *Q.* Sir C. Dilke; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 15, 668
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    Callan, Board of Guardians, *Q.* Mr. P. O'Brien; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1563
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  Dwellings, Longford, *Q.* Mr. A. O'Connor; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 8, 206
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Ordnance Factories,
  Pensions, *Q.* Major H. F. Bowles; *A.* Mr. Powell-Williams *Mar* 16, 759
  Superannuation, *Q.* Captain Norton; *A.* Mr. Powell-Williams *Mar* 15, 665
Penrhyn Quarries, *Q.* Mr. S. Woods; *A.* Lord G. Hamilton *Mar* 29, 1564
St. Vincent Labouring Population, *Q.* Sir C. Dilke; *A.* Mr. J. Chamberlain *Mar* 15, 667
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  Postmen's, *Q.* Sir J. Leng; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 23, 1175
  Post Office, *Q.* Sir J. Leng; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 25, 1317
  Rural Postmen, *Qs.* Captain Donelan, Sir C. Dilke; *As.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 29, 1554
  Woolwich Arsenal, *Q.* Captain Norton; *A.* Mr. Powell-Williams *Mar* 15, 665
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LAFONE, Mr. A., *Southwark, Bermondsey*
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LAMBERT, Mr. GEORGE, *Devonshire, South Molton*
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LANSDOWNE, MARQUESS OF (Secretary of State for War)
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LAURIE, General J. W., *Pembroke and Haverfordwest*
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LAW AND JUSTICE AND POLICE

- *Aldershot Military Prison*, *Q.* Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 16, 749
- *Assizes*
  - *Circuits, Ireland*, *Q.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *A.* Mr. J. Atkinson *Mar* 11, 484
  - *Ireland*, *Qs.* Mr. J. Daly, Mr. James Roche; *As.* Mr. J. Atkinson, Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 15, 657
  - *Monaghan, Diminution of Crime*, *Q.* Mr. J. Daly; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 11, 488
- *Aughnacloy Burgess List*, *Q.* Mr. D. Macaleese; *A.* Mr. J. Atkinson *Mar* 18, 917
- *Betting-houses Act, Hawke* v. *Dunn*, *Q.* Sir W. Lawson; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 16, 758
- *Chancery Division Clerks, High Court of Justice*, *Q.* Mr. E. Boulnois; *A.* Sir R. Webster *Mar* 29, 1572
- *Checkweigher, Coal Mines Regulation Act 1887*, *Q.* Mr. S. Woods; *A.* Sir R. Webster *Mar* 16, 763
- *Codification of Laws*, *Qs.* Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett; *As.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 26, 1440
- *Common Jurors, Ireland*, *Q.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 8, 201
- *Convicts under Sentence*, *Qs.* Mr. E. H. Pickersgill, Mr. A. O'Connor; *As.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 15, 658
- *County Court*
  - *Judges*
    - *Down*, *Qs.* Mr. P. O'Brien; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 12, 572; *Mar* 15, 679; *Mar* 16, 756
    - *Fermanagh and Monaghan*, *Q.* Mr. D. Macaleese; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 23, 1192
    - *Ireland*, *Qs.* Mr. P. O'Brien; *As.* Mr G. Balfour *Mar* 11, 502
  - *Marylebone*, *Q.* Mr. S. Woods; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 29, 1563
  - *Rules*
    - *Consideration of*, *Q.* Sir A. K. Rollit; *A.* Sir R. Webster *Mar* 15, 680
    - *Travelling Expenses*, *Q.* Mr. G. Lambert; *A.* Sir R. Webster *Mar* 29, 1573
- *County Courts and Sub-Sheriffs, Ireland*, *Q.* Mr. J. Tully; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 26, 1440
- *Court of Conscience, Cork*, *Qs.* Mr. Vesey Knox, Mr. W. Johnston; [Mr. Speaker;] *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1557
- *Court of Criminal Appeal Bill* (see that Title)
- *Dartmoor Convict Prison*, *Q.* Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 16, 753
- *Dogs Destroyed, Ireland*, *Qs.* Mr. D. Macaleese, Captain Donelan, Mr. E. H. Carson; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 19, 1032
- *Down County Court Judgeship*, *Qs.* Mr. P. O'Brien; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 12, 572; *Mar* 15, 679; *Mar* 16, 756
- *Embezzlement (Alleged), Kilmarnock*, *Q.* Sir W. Wedderburn; *A.* Mr. Graham Murray *Mar* 18, 925
- *Evicted Tenants*
  - *Cavan*, *Q.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 25, 1306
  - *Monaghan*, *Q.* Mr. J. Daly; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 26, 1432

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LAW AND JUSTICE AND POLICE—cont.

- *Factory Act Prosecution*, *Q.* Sir C. Dilke; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 19, 1025
- *Fair Rents*
  - *Applications*
    - *Cavan*, *Q.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 16, 751
    - *Ireland*, *Qs.* Mr. J. P. Farrell, Mr. E. H. Carson, Mr. J. C. Flynn, Dr. R. Ambrose, Mr. J. Dillon, Mr. J. Daly; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 18, 919
  - *Ireland*, *Qs.* Colonel Saunderson, Mr. T. M. Healy; [Mr. Speaker;] *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 9, 303
- *Gun Licence, Ballybunion, Kerry*, *Q.* Mr. M. J. Flavin; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 26, 1432
- *Grangegorman Prison*, *Qs.* Mr. J. L. Carew; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 5, 50; *Mar* 9, 291
- *High Court of Justice, Chancery Division Clerks*, *Q.* Mr. E. Boulnois; *A.* Sir R. Webster *Mar* 29, 1572
- *Illegal Fishing*, *Q.* Mr. J. W. Crombie; *A.* Mr. Graham Murray *Mar* 11, 494
- *Irish*
  - *Judges*
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      - *Appointment of*, *Qs.* Mr. P. O'Brien; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 11, 502
      - *Down*, *Qs.* Mr. P. O'Brien; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 12, 572; *Mar* 15, 679; *Mar* 16, 756
      - *Fermanagh and Monaghan*, *Q.* Mr. D. Macaleese; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 24, 1192
    - *Military Guard, Cork Assizes*, *Qs.* Mr. Swift MacNeill, Mr. E. H. Carson; *As.* Mr. Hanbury, Mr. J. Atkinson *Mar* 23, 1190
      (For Debate see Title Irish Judges and Military Guards, Ireland)
  - *Meeting Prohibited, Mayo*, *Qs.* Mr. J. Dillon; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 25, 1327
- *Judges' Military Guard, Cork Assizes*, *Qs.* Mr. Swift MacNeill, Mr. E. H. Carson; *As.* Mr. Hanbury, Mr. J. Atkinson *Mar* 23, 1190
- *Juries Detention Bill* (see that Title)
- *Land Commission*
  - *Clontygora Tenants*, *Q.* Mr. T. M. Healy; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 15, 680
  - *Fair Rents*, *Qs.* Mr. E. H. Carson, Mr. D. Macaleese; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 8, 192
  - *Reductions of Rent*, *Qs.* Sir J. Colomb, Mr. M. J. Flavin, Mr. E. H. Carson; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 23, 1174
  - *Sale of Tenancies*, *Q.* Mr. Vesey Knox; *A.* Mr. J. Atkinson *Mar* 22, 1121
  - *Rules*, *Q.* Mr. J. Dillon; *A.* Mr. J. Atkinson *Mar* 5, 52
- *Land Law (Ireland) Act 1896, Rules*, *Q.* Mr. J. Dillon; *A.* Mr. J. Atkinson *Mar* 5, 52
- *Land Sub-Commission*
  - *Connaught*, *Q.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 9, 287
  - *Fermanagh and Monaghan*, *Qs.* Mr. D. Macaleese, Mr. M. Healy; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 11, 497
  - *Omagh*, *Q.* Mr. D. Macaleese; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 16, 753. *Qs.* Mr. G. Murnaghan, Mr. E. H. Carson; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 19, 1035

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LAW AND JUSTICE AND POLICE—cont.

- *Law*
  - *Codification*, *Qs.* Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett; *As.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 26, 1440
  - *Courts, Injury to Workmen*, *Q.* Captain Norton; *A.* Mr. Akers-Douglas *Mar* 25, 1306
- *Loan Fund Societies, Ireland*, *Q.* Mr. Swift-MacNeill; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 11, 503. *Q.* Dr. McDonnell; *A.* Mr. J. Atkinson *Mar* 19, 1031. *Qs.* Dr. McDonnell, Mr. Vesey Knox; *As.* Mr. J. Atkinson *Mar* 23, 1179
- *M'Math Estate, Monaghan*, *Q.* Mr. J. Daly; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 9, 290
- *Magistracy*
  - *Ireland (Mr. Warden)*, *Qs.* Mr. D. Kilbride; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 12, 566
  - *Meath and Cavan*, *Q.* Mr. S. Young; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 25, 1299
- *Metropolitan Police*
  - *Boots*, *Qs.* Captain Norton; *As.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 8, 194; *Mar* 15, 671; *Mar* 29, 1569
  - *Hackney Carriage Department*, *Q.* Captain Norton; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 18, 941
  - *Inspector Fox*, *Q.* Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 15, 676
  - *Regulations*, *Qs.* Mr. E. H. Pickersgill, Captain Norton; *As.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 22, 1104
- *Petty Sessions, Malmesbury*, *Q.* Mr. H. Labouchere; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 12, 561
- *Police*
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  - *Protection*
    - *Cavan*, *Qs.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 18, 914
    - *Dromod, Monaghan*, *Q.* Mr. J. Daly; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1549
  - *Supervision*, *Qs.* Captain Pirie; *As.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 16, 760; *Mar* 29, 1566
- *Poor Law and Municipal Franchise, Ireland*, *Q.* Mr. T. Harrington; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 18, 941
- *Prisoners*
  - *Awaiting Trial*, *Q.* Captain Pirie; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 16, 760
  - *Treason-felony*, *Qs.* Mr. W. Field, Mr. M McCartan; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1545
- *Prisons*
  - *Aldershot Military*, *Q.* Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 16, 749
  - *Clerks*, *Q.* Mr. F. Platt-Higgins; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 29, 1550
  - *Commissioners*, *Q.* Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 11, 506
  - *Dartmoor Convict*, *Q.* Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 16, 753
  - *Grangegorman*, *Qs.* Mr. J. L. Carew; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 5, 50; *Mar* 9, 291
  - *Physical Drill*, *Q.* Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 19, 1020
  - *Service, Scottish*, *Qs.* Mr. Orr-Ewing; *As.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 25, 1297

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- *Prisons*—cont.
  - *Visiting Committees*,
    - *Annual Conference*, *Q.* Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 18, 915
    - *New Rules*, *Q.* Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 19, 1020
  - *Warders*
    - *Instruction of*, *Q.* Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 29, 1569
    - *Punishment of*, *Q.* Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 18, 915
- *Rent*
  - *Decrees, Ireland*, *Q.* Mr. J. Daly; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 19, 1032
  - *Processes for, Galway*, *Qs.* Mr. D. Kilbride, Mr. W. O'Malley; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 16, 749
- *Royal Irish Constabulary*
  - *County Inspectors*, *Qs.* Mr. J. Daly, Mr. J. Tully; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 25, 1301. *Qs.* Mr. J. P. Farrell, Mr. J. Tully; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1546
  - *Force Fund*, *Qs.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 9, 286; *Mar* 18, 928
- *School*
  - *Attendance Committees, Ireland*, *Q.* Mr. J. O'Connor; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1569
  - *Board Election, Counting Voting Papers*, *Q.* Mr. J. Brigg; *A.* Sir J. Gorst *Mar* 25, 1318
- *Shuttle Guards*, *Q.* Sir C. Dilke; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 23, 1170
- *Suck Drainage Award*, *Qs.* Mr. J. O'Kelly, Mr. D. Kilbride; *As.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 8, 185
- *Supreme Court, Revision of Rules*, *Q.* Mr. Atherley-Jones; *A.* Sir R. Webster *Mar* 8, 207
- *Thames Police Court*, *Q.* Mr. C. J. Darling; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 25, 1302
- *Treason-felony Prisoners*, *Qs.* Mr. W. Field, Mr. M. McCartan; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1545
- *Valuation and Boundary Survey, Ireland*, *Qs.* Mr. J. Daly; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 22, 1107

LAWRENCE, Mr. EDWIN, *Cornwall, Truro*

- Navy Estimates: 100,050 Men and Boys *Mar* 12, 586
- Piers and Harbours *Mar* 23, 1228

LAWRENCE, Mr. WILLIAM F., *Liverpool, Abercromby*

- Mersey Channels Bill, Intro. *Mar* 16, 783

LAWSON, MR. J. GRANT (Parliamentary Charity Commissioner), *York, N.R., Thirsk and Malton*

- Charity Commission *Mar* 16, 746
- Delivery of Letters *Mar* 5, 54

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LAWSON, Mr. J. GRANT—*cont.*

(Rulings as Chairman of Committees)

Voluntary Schools Bill

I do not think he would be in order in referring to the whole system of education in Ireland, but he would not be out of order in asking a question thereupon *Mar* 18, 981

The hon. Gentleman is not in order in discussing his dissatisfaction with the proceedings in Committee *Mar* 18, 985

Supply

The hon. Member must confine himself to something to do with the administration of the Home Office as constituted in the present year *Mar* 26, 1501

Miscellaneous Rulings

Mar 18, 982; *Mar* 26, 1501

LAWSON, Sir WILFRID, Bart., *Cumberland, Cockermouth*

Betting-houses Act, Hawke *v.* Dunn *Mar* 16, 758

Business of the House *Mar* 18, 1008

Licensing Exemption (Houses of Parliament) Bill, 2R. *Mar* 12, 648

Norfolk Island *Mar* 29, 1556

LECKY, Mr. W. E. HARTPOLE, *Dublin University*

Educational Endowments (Ireland) Act *Mar* 8, 247

LEGH, Hon. T. WODEHOUSE, *Lancashire, S.W., Newton*

Crete *Mar* 8, 199

Navy Estimates: £4,696,000 for Wages, etc. *Mar* 19, 1050

Presence of Foreign Representative at Public Meeting *Mar* 15, 672, 673

Supply: £10,631,218 for Vote on Account *Mar* 26, 1526

LEIGHTON, Mr. STANLEY, *Shropshire, Oswestry*

Historical Manuscripts Commission *Mar* 18, 916

LENG, Sir JOHN, *Dundee*

American Mails *Mar* 15, 656

Clerical Incomes, Taxation *Mar* 23, 1216

Food Products Adulteration *Mar* 25, 1326

Pauper Soldiers *Mar* 16, 752

Postmen's Wages *Mar* 23, 1175

Post Office

Establishments, Report *Mar* 11, 487

Wages *Mar* 25, 1317

Public Health (Scotland) Bill, 2R. *Mar* 22, 1153

Queen's Reign

Crimean and Indian Mutiny Veterans *Mar* 9, 285

Crimean Veterans *Mar* 18, 923

Universities and Colleges, Government Grant *Mar* 18, 929

LEUTY, Mr. T. R., *Leeds, E.*

Indian Famine *Mar* 9, 280, 281

Voluntary Schools Bill, In Com. *Mar* 18, 953, 979

LEWIS, Mr. J. HERBERT, *Flint Boroughs*

Business of the House: Supply, Colonial Vote *Mar* 5, 62

Military Works Bill, In Com. *Mar* 22, 1134, 1143, 1147

Voluntary Schools Bill, Associations *Mar* 15, 679

Voluntary Schools Bill, In Com. *Mar* 10, 409; *Mar* 11, 536; *Mar* 15, 686, 703, 715, 730; *Mar* 16, 793, 819; *Mar* 17, 877, 878, 883, 886; *Mar* 18, 952, 957, 961, 962, 971, 983

Licensing Exemption (Houses of Parliament) Bill

c. 2R., Sir R. Webster, 647; Sir W. Lawson, 648 *Mar* 12

LLOYD-GEORGE, Mr. DAVID, *Carnarvon Boroughs*

Voluntary Schools Bill, In Com. *Mar* 8, 209, 211, 216, 217; *Mar* 9, 335; *Mar* 10, 426; *Mar* 15, 688; *Mar* 16, 784, 818, 824, 844; *Mar* 17, 854, 855, 856, 884

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD

President—Mr. H. CHAPLIN
Secretary—Mr. T. W. RUSSELL

Agricultural Rates Act 1896, *Q.* Mr. T. G. Ashton; *A.* Mr. T. W. Russell *Mar* 16, 748

Allotments, Norfolk County Council, *Q.* Mr. Cozens-Hardy; *A.* Mr. T. W. Russell *Mar* 9, 283

Children's Metropolitan Asylums Board, *Q.* Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Mr. T. W. Russell *Mar* 12, 574. *Q.* Mr. E. Flower; *A.* Mr. T. W. Russell *Mar* 16, 762. *Qs.* Mr. H. H. Bemrose, Mr. E. Flower, Mr. T. Lough; *As.* Mr. H. Chaplin *Mar* 23, 1182

Government Property Rating, *Q.* Mr. Henniker Heaton; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 18, 917

Local Taxation, *Q.* Sir J. Lubbock; *A.* Mr. H. Chaplin *Mar* 23, 1192

London County Council

Audit, *Q.* Sir A. R. Scoble; *A.* Mr. T. W. Russell *Mar* 29, 1538

Water Supply, *Q.* Sir F. Dixon-Hartland; *A.* Mr. H. Chaplin *Mar* 22, 1116

Metropolitan Poor Law Schools, *Qs.* Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *As.* Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 9, 298

Middlesex County Council, Technical Education, *Q.* Major H. F. Bowles; *A.* Mr. T. W. Russell *Mar* 16, 759

Ophthalmia Patients, *Qs.* Dr. Farquharson, Mr. A. J. Mundella; *As.* Mr. T. W. Russell *Mar* 19, 1022

[*cont.*

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD—cont.
Parish Councils
Accounts, Scotland, Q. Mr. R. Souttar; *A.* Mr. Graham Murray *Mar* 18, 949
Board Schools and, Q. Mr. J. Colville; *A.* Mr. Graham Murray *Mar* 16, 761
Meeting, Poll, Q. Mr. H. C. F. Luttrell; *A.* Mr. T. W. Russell *Mar* 19, 1036
Poor Law Officers, Pensions, Q. Mr. T. G. Ashton; *A.* Mr. T. W. Russell *Mar* 22, 1109
Wanstead Flats, Q. Mr. L. Sinclair; *A.* Mr. T. W. Russell *Mar* 12, 568

LOCKWOOD, Colonel A., *Essex, Epping*
Chelsea Water Bill, 2R. *Mar* 11, 439, 451, 476

LOCKWOOD, Sir FRANK, *York*
Voluntary Schools Bill, In Com. *Mar* 9, 319, 366; *Mar* 11, 528; *Mar* 16, 822; *Mar* 17, 864

LOGAN, Mr. JOHN WILLIAM, *Leicester, Harborough*
Voluntary Schools Bill, In Com. *Mar* 18, 993

London (Borough Road, Southwark) Provisional Order Bill
l. Read 2ª and com. to Com. of Whole House *Mar* 11, 432
Read 3ª and Passed *Mar* 15, 649
Royal Assent *Mar* 29, 1529

London (Churchway, St. Pancras) Provisional Order Bill
Royal Assent *Mar* 29, 1529

LONDONDERRY, Marquess of
Land Law (Ireland) Act 1881 *Mar* 18, 901, 904
Working Men's Dwellings Bill, 2R. *Mar* 9, 269, 270; *Mar* 12, 553; *Mar* 18, 890

London Taxation, Grants in Aid
Mr. T. Lough, (*Motion for Select Com.*) 1224, 1228; Sir J. Lubbock, 1226; Mr. H. Chaplin, 1227 (*Motion withdrawn*, 1228) *Mar* 23

London Water (Purchase) Bill
c. Withdrawn *Mar* 11, 483

LONG, RIGHT HON. WALTER H. (President of the Board of Agriculture), *Liverpool, West Derby*
Channel Transit of Live Stock, Consignment Notes *Mar* 11, 506
Doncaster Town Moor, Horse Racing *Mar* 25, 1309
International Agricultural Congress *Mar* 29, 1546
Muzzling Dogs *Mar* 11, 500
Pleuro-pneumonia *Mar* 29, 1544, 1545
Rabies *Mar* 25, 1295
Swine Fever, Bishop's Waltham *Mar* 29, 1565
Weighing of Cattle *Mar* 25, 1294

LOUGH, Mr. THOMAS, *Islington, W.*
Agricultural Rating Act 1896 (Extension to Ireland) *Mar* 25, 1316
Army (Annual) Bill, 2R. *Mar* 18, 1006
Business of the House *Mar* 18, 1007
Children's Metropolitan Asylums Board *Mar* 23, 1182
Financial Relations, Great Britain and Ireland *Mar* 29, 1648
Great Northern Railway Bill *Mar* 8, 159
Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Bill *Mar* 8, 176
London Taxation, Grants in Aid *Mar* 23, 1224, 1228
Military Works Bill, In Com. *Mar* 18, 1003; *Mar* 22, 1128, 1129, 1130, 1131, 1133, 1134, 1136, 1137, 1138, 1139, 1144
Navy Estimates
100,050 Men and Boys *Mar* 12, 640, 643
£4,696,000 for Wages, etc. *Mar* 19, 1053, 1054, 1056
South Kensington Museum *Mar* 12, 578
Voluntary Schools Bill, In Com. *Mar* 9, 331, 361; *Mar* 11, 515; *Mar* 16, 835, 844; *Mar* 18, 992, 1002

LOWLES, Mr. J., *Shoreditch, Haggerston*
City of London (Inclusion of Southwark) Bill, 2R. *Mar* 22, 1101

LOWTHER, MR. J. W. (Chairman of Committees of Ways and Means and Deputy Speaker), *Cumberland, Penrith*
Great Northern Railway Bill *Mar* 8, 166
Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Bill *Mar* 8, 182
Midland and Great Northern Railways Joint Committee Bill, 2R. *Mar* 9, 274

(Rulings as Chairman of Committees)

Military Works Bill
The Chairman, in reply to Mr. Lough, on a point of order, said the hon. Member was right in assuming that the Amendments on the Paper to the schedule were not in order. He did not say that Amendments could not be put down that would be in order *Mar* 22, 1139
The Chairman said: "This question was raised and thoroughly discussed on the first clause, and the hon. Member is not entitled to repeat the whole of his arguments, or to raise the question again." *Mar* 22, 1144
The Chairman said: "There is no proposal in the Bill for erecting permanent buildings on Salisbury Plain, and therefore no discussion can be raised upon the subject." *Mar* 22, 1145

Navy Estimates: 100,050 Men and Boys
The Chairman said: "I think that discussion should be raised on the Non-effective Vote." *Mar* 12, 645

[*cont.*

LOWTHER, Mr. J. W.—*cont.*

(Rulings as Chairman of Committees)—cont.

Navy Estimates: £4,696,000 for Wages, etc.

The Chairman said: "The Admirals simply carried out the instructions of the Admiralty, and the Admiralty are responsible for the issue of instructions, and, therefore, any criticisms must be made upon the salary of the First Lord of the Admiralty, by whom the instructions are issued." *Mar* 19, 1038

The Chairman said: "That would not arise upon this Vote, for obviously the Admirals who carry out the instructions are not responsible." *Mar* 19, 1039

The Chairman said: "The House has already decided to increase the number of men employed in the Navy. It is open for the hon. Member to move that their pay shall be reduced; otherwise I do not see how he can cut down the Vote by three-quarters of a million without reducing the number of men." *Mar* 19, 1053

The Chairman said: "The House has already decided to increase the number of men. If the hon. Member can show that the same number of men can be maintained out of the reduced sum he is entitled to do so, but the general question cannot be raised a second time." *Mar* 19, 1054

Supply: £10,631,218 for Vote on Account

The Chairman said: "Any subject which is germane to the Local Government Board can be raised on this Motion." *Mar* 26, 1451

The Chairman said, the hon. Member for North Cork was in possession, and had expressed his intention of moving a reduction on the Home Office Vote. If that hon. Member gave way it would be open to any hon. Member to resume the discussion in reference to the Local Government Board *Mar* 26, 1486

Voluntary Schools Bill

The Chairman reminded the hon. Member that the only question before the Committee was that a scheme should be submitted to Parliament *Mar* 8, 227

The Chairman said: "On the ground that it imposes certain duties upon an authority which has been constituted for wholly different duties, and those duties are sought to be imposed by this Amendment without any preliminary Resolution of the House." *Mar* 8, 228

The Chairman said: "I do not quite follow how the hon. Member makes his line of remark relevant to the present Amendment. He seems to be discussing the last Amendment. I should like the hon. Member to explain what the meaning of his Amendment is." *Mar* 9, 333

The Chairman said: "If that be so, the hon. Member is seeking to upset the decision to which the Committee has just come." *Mar* 9, 333

LOWTHER, Mr. J. W.—*cont.*

(Rulings as Chairman of Committees)—cont.

Voluntary Schools Bill—cont.

The Chairman said: "If the Amendment be intended to be a definition of the word 'necessitous' it clearly ought to come in the definition clause. The first and third Amendments of the hon. Member for Anglesey, standing on the top of page 20, are in order, but ought to come at the end of the clause." *Mar* 9, 334

The Chairman said: "I think it is beyond the scope of the Bill altogether. The Amendment of the hon. Member for East Northamptonshire (Mr. Channing) is in order, but it ought to come up as a new clause. The next Amendment in order is at the top of page 22, Mr. Lloyd-George." *Mar* 9, 334

The Chairman said: "The hon. Member will remember that the subject was discussed on Clause 1, page 1, line 5, where an hon. Member for one of the Divisions of Lincolnshire moved to insert the words, 'in which no charge for school fees is made.' He will remember that I several times pointed out it was not the proper place to discuss the Amendment, or, indeed, to move it. What the hon. Member intended was to move it on the second sub-section, but as he moved it on the first sub-section and took a Division the Committee are precluded from re-opening the question." *Mar* 9, 334

The Chairman said: "That was not my fault, but the fault of the hon. Member, who chose to move his Amendment in the wrong place." *Mar* 9, 335

The Chairman said: "If the hon. Member's Amendment be intended to provide an alternative to the scheme of the Government, it is quite clear the Government are entitled to have their scheme placed before the Committee first." *Mar* 9, 335

The Chairman said: "It is extremely unusual to cross-examine the Chairman in the way that is now being done. I think it will not be my duty to reply any further. I may say, however, that I have taken a great deal of trouble to understand the Amendments, and I do not not think it would conduce to the order of business if I were cross-examined as to my reasons." *Mar* 9, 335

The Chairman said, he was afraid the hon. Member could not move the Amendment in that form, because it was an alternative to the next words. The way he would put the Amendment would be to leave out "in such areas" *Mar* 10, 403

The Chairman said, that one alternative only to the words of the Bill could be proposed at a time. It would be very inconvenient to discuss half-a-dozen alternatives at the same time. The general rule of the House was that there should be a Motion and an Amendment, and if the Committee pronounced in favour of one, it was obvious that the other was

[*cont.*

LOWTHER, Mr. J. W.—*cont.*
  (Rulings as Chairman of Committees)—cont.
  Voluntary Schools Bill—cont.
    rejected. The proper course was to discuss the question of areas upon the Amendment of the hon. Member, and if the Committee approved of the words in the Bill, no other areas could be suggested *Mar* 10, 403
    The Chairman said, he did not mean that the discussion was to be limited in the sense referred to by the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon Gentleman said that he objected to the words "in such areas," and might equally object to the proposal of the Amendment. The right hon. Gentleman could vote against the words "in such areas," and if they were struck out he could vote against any other words which might be proposed *Mar* 10, 403
    The Chairman said: "Of course the discussion has gone a little way from the point of the Amendment, but I think the right hon. Gentleman is entitled to reply to the criticisms that have been made by the hon. Member. After that reply has been made I think the Committee should resume the Debate on the Amendment." *Mar* 11, 525
    The Chairman said, the only question then before the Committee was whether the governing bodies of these associations were to be elected or not *Mar* 11, 528
    The Chairman said: "The next three Amendments were in order, but they all raised, in his opinion, exactly the same point. The Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Fife seemed to him to raise the point in a better and fuller manner than the others, and it was within his discretion which Amendment he would receive." *Mar* 15, 716
    The Chairman said, the hon. Member was entitled to urge upon the Committee as a reason for rejecting this clause that he had a better clause which he proposed to submit, but before the clause of the hon. Member could be discussed in detail this clause must be negatived *Mar* 18, 963
    The Chairman said: "I really do not see the relevancy of this. Even if the Amendment which the hon. Member is supporting were carried, the grievances to which he refers would not be remedied." *Mar* 18, 978.
  Miscellaneous Rulings
    Mar 8, 225; *Mar* 9, 318, 333; *Mar* 10, 404; *Mar* 11, 515, 516, 517, 519, 526, 536; *Mar* 15, 684, 716; *Mar* 16, 784, 793, 839; *Mar* 17, 856, 863; *Mar* 18, 967, 977; *Mar* 19, 1038, 1057; *Mar* 22, 1128, 1139, 1140, 1145, 1146, 1148

LOWTHER, Right Hon. JAMES, *Kent, Isle of Thanet*
  Betting on Racecourses *Mar* 18, 949
  Burgess Roll, Kilkenny *Mar* 23, 1193
  Crete *Mar* 8, 198; *Mar* 12, 576; *Mar* 15, 673, 674, 676; *Mar* 16, 764

[*cont.*

LOWTHER, Right Hon. JAMES—*cont.*
  Crete, Relief of Candamos *Mar* 10, 428
  Great Northern Railway Bill *Mar* 8, 168, 169
  Land Commission, Officers *Mar* 29, 1541
  Navy Estimates: £4,696,000 for Wages, etc. *Mar* 19, 1048, 1049

LOYD, Mr. A. K., *Berks, Abingdon*
  Court of Criminal Appeal Bill, 2R. *Mar* 24, 1251, 1257

LUBBOCK, Right Hon. Sir JOHN, Bart., *London University*
  Chelsea Water Bill, 2R. *Mar* 11, 458
  Local Taxation *Mar* 23, 1192
  London Taxation, Grants in Aid *Mar* 23, 1226
  Voluntary Schools Bill, In Com. *Mar* 9, 331; *Mar* 15, 687

Lunacy
  Asylums
    Belfast Lunatic, Death of Inmate, Q. Mr. G. Murnaghan; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 15, 677
    Board, Children's Metropolitan, Q. Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Mr. T. W. Russell *Mar* 12, 574. *Q.* Mr. E. Flower; *A.* Mr. T. W. Russell *Mar* 16, 762. *Qs.* Mr. H. H. Bemrose, Mr. E. Flower, Mr. T. Lough; *As.* Mr. H. Chaplin *Mar* 23, 1182
    Private, Q. Mr. W. Field; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 8, 187
    Richmond, Dublin, Qs. Mr. J. L. Carew, Mr. E. H. Carson; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 18, 943
  Commissioners' Report, Qs. Mr. G. C. T. Bartley; *As.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 9, 294
  England and Wales, Q. Mr. H. Hobhouse; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 15, 680
  Insane, Suicide Return, Q. Mr. W. J. Corbet; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 8, 195

LUTTRELL, Mr. H. C. F., *Devonshire, Tavistock*
  Ordnance Store Department *Mar* 11, 483
  Parish Council Meetings, Poll *Mar* 19, 1036
  Voluntary Schools Bill, In Com. *Mar* 10, 425; *Mar* 18, 966

LYELL, Sir LEONARD, Bart., *Orkney and Shetland*
  Channel Fleet *Mar* 25, 1315
  Scotch Mail Service *Mar* 22, 1106

MACALEESE, Mr. D., *Monaghan, N.*
  Agricultural Rating Act *Mar* 25, 1323
  Aughnacloy Burgess List *Mar* 18, 917
  Clogher Valley Tramway *Mar* 12, 562
  Dogs Destroyed, Ireland *Mar* 19, 1032
  Land
    Commission, Fair Rents *Mar* 8, 192
    Sub-Commissioners, Omagh *Mar* 16, 753

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Macaleese, Mr. D.—*cont.*
  Monaghan
    Coote Estate *Mar* 15, 660
    Fermanagh and
      County Court Judge *Mar* 23, 1192
      Land Sub-Commission *Mar* 11, 497
  Poor Relief (Ireland) Bill *Mar* 15, 670
  Post Office, Female Telegraph Learners *Mar* 16, 756
  Rosscarberry Convent *Mar* 15, 669

MACARTNEY, Mr. W. G. ELLISON (Secretary to the Admiralty), *Antrim, S.*
  Coopers, Navy *Mar* 12, 556
  Dockyard Officers' Pay *Mar* 12, 569
  Naval Engineer Officers *Mar* 11, 490
  Navy Estimates
    £2,675,000 for Armaments *Mar* 19, 1075
    £10,600 for Martial Law *Mar* 19, 1063
    100,050 Men and Boys *Mar* 12, 584, 628, 629, 630, 631, 635
    £249,900 for Royal Naval Reserves *Mar* 19, 1074, 1075
    £4,696,000 for Wages, etc. *Mar* 19, 1057
  Torpedo Boats, Royal Navy *Mar* 18, 948

McCalmont, General Hugh, *Antrim, N.*
  Land Commission Officers *Mar* 29, 1540

McCartan, Mr. M., *Down, S.*
  Agricultural Prices, Ireland *Mar* 29, 1560
  Treason-felony Prisoners *Mar* 29 1545

Macdona, Mr. J. Cumming, *Southwark, Rotherhithe*
  City of London (Inclusion of Southwark) Bill, 2R. *Mar* 22, 1092
  Navy Estimates: £249,900 for Royal Naval Reserves *Mar* 19, 1074

McDonnell, Dr. M. A., *Queen's County, Leix*
  Loan Fund Societies, Ireland *Mar* 19, 1031; *Mar* 23, 1179

McGhee, Mr. R., *Louth, S.*
  Industrial Schools, Ireland *Mar* 29, 1551

M‘Hugh, Mr. P. A., *Leitrim, N.*
  Catholic University, Ireland *Mar* 11, 507
  Irish National School Teachers, Residual Grant *Mar* 11, 489
  Local Loan Stock Bill *Mar* 12, 565
  Military Lands Act (1892) Amendment Bill, In Com. *Mar* 22, 1162
  Navy Estimates: 100,050 Men and Boys *Mar* 12, 645
  Parliamentary Debates *Mar* 12, 564

McIver, Sir Lewis, Bart., *Edinburgh, W.*
  Universities of Oxford and Cambridge Act, 1877 *Mar* 26, 1528

McKenna, Mr. R., *Monmouthshire, N.*
  Voluntary Schools Bill, In Com. *Mar* 9, 330, 337; *Mar* 10, 426; *Mar* 11, 535; *Mar* 16, 788, 817, 826

McKillop, Mr. James, *Stirlingshire*
  Telephone Service *Mar* 8, 190

Maclean, Mr. James M., *Cardiff*
  Crete *Mar* 15, 673

McLeod, Mr. John, *Sutherland*
  Agricultural Rating Bill *Mar* 12, 570
  Aldershot, Canteens and Messes *Mar* 22, 1125
  Business of the House (Supply) Scottish Estimates *Mar* 22, 1126
  Crete *Mar* 22, 1120, 1121
  Piers and Boatslips, Scotland *Mar* 23, 1189
  Public Works, Scotland *Mar* 25, 1315

Maclure, Mr. J. W., *Lancashire, S.E., Stretford.*
  Manchester Regiment, 2nd Volunteer Battalion *Mar* 8, 191

MacNeill, Mr. J. G. Swift, *Donegal, S.*
  Cork Assizes, Judges' Military Guard *Mar* 23, 1190, 1191
  Crete *Mar* 8, 199, 200; *Mar* 9, 300, 301; *Mar* 11, 508, 509, 510; *Mar* 22, 1119; *Mar* 23, 1183; *Mar* 25, 1312, 1313; *Mar* 26, 1438
  Evicted Farms, Meeting at Cahir *Mar* 9, 289
  Experiments on Living Animals *Mar* 12, 563; *Mar* 23, 1180, 1181
  Foreign Orders *Mar* 29, 1573
  Irish
    Land Commission Rules *Mar* 11, 545
    Mail Service *Mar* 8, 204; *Mar* 12, 559
  Loan Fund
    Acts, Ireland *Mar* 5, 53
    Societies, Ireland *Mar* 11, 503
  Nazim Pasha *Mar* 9, 298; *Mar* 11, 499, 500; *Mar* 25, 1322, 1323
  Payos Officials *Mar* 25, 1323

Maple, Sir J. Blundell, *Camberwell, Dulwich*
  City of London (Inclusion of Southwark) Bill, 2R. *Mar* 22, 1095

Marine Garrison in Naval Bases
  On Motion, That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair: Sir J. Colomb, (*Amendt.*) 123, 137; Mr. G. J. Goschen, 123, 135, 137; Captain Phillpotts, 130; General Russell, 131, 133; [Mr. Speaker, 133, 139;] Mr. Arnold-Forster, 133; Mr. H. E. Kearley, 138, 139; Mr. A. J. Balfour, 139; (*Divisions*, 139) *Mar* 5

Market Gardeners' Compensation (Scotland) Bill
  c. Intro., Sir T. Gibson-Carmichael; Read 1º *Mar* 9, 306

MARKS, Mr. HARRY H., *Tower Hamlets, St. George's-in-the-East*
- Chelsea Water Bill, 2R. *Mar* 11, 479
- Queen's Reign, Jubilee Procession *Mar* 25, 1328
- Restraint of Evictions (London) Bill, Intro. *Mar* 26, 1443

MARTIN, Mr. R. B., *Worcestershire, Mid*
- Liberator Group of Companies *Mar* 8, 191

MASSEY-MAINWARING, Hon. W. F. B., *Finsbury, Central*
- Post Office Establishments *Mar* 29, 1560
- Wallace Collection, Bequest to Nation *Mar* 26, 1441

MAXWELL, Sir HERBERT E., Bart., *Wigtownshire*
- Trout Fishing, Close Time (Scotland) Bill, Intro. *Mar* 12, 581
- Water Supply, Punjab *Mar* 18, 938
- Weighing of Cattle *Mar* 25, 1293, 1294

MAXWELL, Sir J. STIRLING- (see STIRLING-MAXWELL)

MELLOR, Colonel J. J., *Lancashire, S.E., Radcliffe-cum-Farnworth*
- Employers' Liability Act, East Lancashire Paper Mill Company *Mar* 16, 768

MERCHANT SHIPPING

- *Bills of Lading*, *Q.* Mr. W. Field; *A.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 11, 505
- *Canal Navigation*, *Qs.* Sir J. T. Brunner; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 25, 1317
- *Channel Transit of Live Stock, Consignment Notes*, *Q.* Mr. W. Field; *A.* Mr. W. Long *Mar* 11, 506
- *Collisions at Sea, Regulations for Preventing*, *Q.* Mr. C. H. Wilson; *A.* Lord G. Hamilton *Mar* 29, 1567
- *Danish Trawlers in Scotch Waters*, *Qs.* Marquess of Huntly; *As.* Lord Balfour *Mar* 8, 145. *Qs.* Mr. J. E. Gordon, Captain Pirie, Sir W. Wedderburn, Mr. Gibson Bowles; *As.* Mr. Graham Murray *Mar* 8, 203. *Qs.* Captain Pirie; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 9, 303. *Qs.* Mr. C. H. Wilson, Captain Pirie; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 11, 499
- *Daunt's Rock Lightship*, *Qs.* Mr. P. O'Brien, Mr. M. Austin, Mr. M. Healy; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 9, 297. *Qs.* Mr. M. Healy; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 11, 500
- *Illegal Fishing*
  - *Amendment of Act*, *Q.* Mr. J. W. Crombie; *A.* Mr. Graham Murray *Mar* 11, 494
  - *Moray Firth*, *Q.* Mr. J. E. Gordon; *A.* Mr. Graham Murray *Mar* 23, 1193
- *Light Dues, Foreign States and British Colonies*, *Qs.* Sir G. Baden-Powell; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 19, 1033
- *Mercantile Marine Fund*, *Qs.* Sir G. Baden-Powell; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 5, 48

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- *Parcel Traffic, England and America*, *Qs.* Sir H. Vincent; *As.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 23, 1172
- *Piers*
  - *Boatslips and, Scotland*, *Qs.* Mr. J. McLeod; *As.* Mr. Graham Murray *Mar* 23, 1189
  - *Wicklow*, *Q.* Mr. J. L. Carew; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 16, 757
- *Red Sea Lights*, *Qs.* Sir J. Fergusson; *As.* Mr. Curzon, Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 25, 1298
- *Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea*, *Q.* Mr. C. H. Wilson; *A.* Lord G. Hamilton *Mar* 29, 1567
- *Royal National Lifeboat Institution, Select Committee*, *Qs.* Sir W. Houldsworth, Mr. C. E. Schwann, Sir R. U. Penrose Fitzgerald; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 23, 1185
- *Shannon Salmon Fishery*, *Qs.* Mr. James Roche, Captain Donelan; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 8, 206
- *Steamship*
  - *Bergnon, Death of Seaman*, *Q.* Mr. J. Havelock Wilson; *A.* Mr. Curzon *Mar* 19, 1028
  - *City of Agra, Wreck of*, *Q.* Mr. J. Havelock Wilson; *A.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 19, 1029
  - *Osborn, Discharge of Crew*, *Q.* Mr. J. Havelock Wilson; *A.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 19, 1027
- *Trawling in Bantry Bay*, *Q.* Mr. J. Gilhooly; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 18, 924
- *Wicklow*
  - *Harbour Commissioners*, *Q.* Mr. J. L. Carew; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 19, 1030
  - *Pier*, *Q.* Mr. J. L. Carew; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 16, 757

Mersey Channels Bill

- *c.* Intro., Mr. W. F. Lawrence; Read 1° *Mar* 16 783
- Read 2° *Mar* 18, 1007
- In Com., R.P. *Mar* 22, 1168

METROPOLIS

- *Betting-houses Act, Hawke* v. *Dunn*, *Q.* Sir W. Lawson; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 16, 758
- *Board Schools*, *Q.* Mr. W. E. T. Sharpe; *A.* Sir J. Gorst *Mar* 18, 919
- *Chelsea Hospital*
  - *Contraband Tobacco*, *Qs.* Captain Norton; *As.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 15, 664; *Mar* 22, 1111
  - *Meat Supply*, *Q.* Captain Donelan; *A.* Mr. Powell-Williams *Mar* 25, 1298
- *Chelsea Water (Purchase) Bill* (see that Title)
- *City of London (Inclusion of Southwark) Bill* (see that Title)
- *Government Offices (Appropriation of Sites)*, *Q.* Sir H. Fowler; *A.* Mr. Akers-Douglas *Mar* 16, 755
- *Hampton Court Park*, *Q.* Mr. Skewes-Cox; *A.* Mr. Akers-Douglas *Mar* 22, 1121
- *House of Commons*
  - *Members' Smoking Accommodation*, *Qs.* Mr. J. Aird, Sir C. Dalrymple; *As.* Mr. Akers-Douglas *Mar* 15, 660. *Q.* Mr. J. Aird; *A.* Mr. Akers-Douglas *Mar* 22, 1107
  - *Terrace (Strangers)*, *Qs.* Sir H. Fowler; *As.* Mr. Akers-Douglas *Mar* 25, 1314

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METROPOLIS—cont.
- *Law Courts (Injury to Workmen)*, *Q.* Captain Norton; *A.* Mr. Akers-Douglas *Mar* 25, 1306
- *London*
  - *County Council*
    - *Audit*, *Q.* Sir A. R. Scoble; *A.* Mr. T. W. Russell *Mar* 29, 1538
    - *Water Supply*, *Q.* Sir F. Dixon-Hartland; *A.* Mr. H. Chaplin *Mar* 22, 1116
  - *Parks (Cycling Tracks)*, *Q.* Mr. H. Seton-Karr; *A.* Mr. Akers-Douglas *Mar* 15, 661
  - *Taxation (Grants in Aid)* (see that Title)
- *Marylebone County Court*, *Q.* Mr. S. Woods; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 29, 1563
- *Metropolitan*
  - *Asylums Board, Children's*, *Q.* Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Mr. T. W. Russell *Mar* 12, 574. *Q.* Mr. E. Flower; *A.* Mr. T. W. Russell *Mar* 16, 762. *Qs.* Mr. H. H. Bemrose, Mr. E. Flower, Mr. T. Lough; *As.* Mr. H. Chaplin *Mar* 23, 1182
  - *Police*
    - *Boots*, *Qs.* Captain Norton; *As.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 8, 194; *Mar* 15, 671; *Mar* 22, 1105; *Mar* 29, 1569
    - *Hackney Carriage Department*, *Q.* Captain Norton; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 18, 941
    - *Inspector Fox*, *Q.* Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 15, 676
    - *Questions on Arrest*, *Q.* Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 22, 1104
  - *Poor Law Schools*, *Qs.* Mr. E. H. Pickersgill; *As.* Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 9, 298
- *Queen's Reign*
  - *Colonial*
    - *Premiers*, *Q.* Mr. J. F. Hogan; *A.* Mr. J. Chamberlain *Mar* 29, 1552
    - *Troops*, *Q.* Mr. J. F. Hogan; *A.* Mr. Brodrick *Mar* 8, 195
  - *Jubilee Procession*
    - *Eviction of Tenants*, *Qs.* Sir J. T. Brunner, Mr. C. J. Darling; [Mr. Speaker;] *As.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 23, 1184
    - *Members of Parliament*, *Q.* Mr. H. E. Kearley; *A.* Mr. Akers-Douglas *Mar* 18, 947. *Qs.* Mr. C. J. Darling, Mr. H. E. Kearley, Mr. J. C. Williams, Mr. Gibson Bowles; *As.* Sir Matthew White Ridley, Mr. Akers-Douglas *Mar* 25, 1302
- *St. Stephen's School, Lewisham*, *Q.* Lord H. Cecil; *A.* Sir J. Gorst *Mar* 26, 1435
- *Scotland Yard, Cab Drivers*, *Q.* Captain Norton; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 25, 1324
- *South Kensington Museum*, *Q.* Mr. T. Lough; *A.* Sir M. Hicks Beach *Mar* 12, 578
- *Telephone Wire*, *Qs.* Mr. Henniker Heaton; *As.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 19, 1021
- *Thames Police Court*, *Q.* Mr. C. J. Darling; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 25, 1302
- *Wanstead Flats*, *Q.* Mr. L. Sinclair; *A.* Mr. T. W. Russell *Mar* 12, 561

Metropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill
- Royal Assent *Mar* 29, 1529

Midland and Great Northern Railways Joint Committee Bill
- *c.* 2R., Mr. H. S. Foster, (*Amendt.*) 271, 276; Major Rasch, 274; Mr. J. W. Lowther, 274; Sir J. Colomb, 275; Mr. Gibson Bowles, 276; (*Amendt. withdrawn*, 276) *Mar 9*
- Read 2° *Mar* 9, 276

Military Lands Act (1892) Amendment Bill
- *c.* In Com., Mr. Brodrick, 1162; Mr. P. A. M'Hugh, 1162; R. P. *Mar* 22
- In Com., R. P. *Mar* 25, 1425
- In Com., Rep. as Amended *Mar* 29, 1653

Military Works Bill
- *c.* In Com., Mr. T. Lough, (*Amendt.*) 1003; Mr. Brodrick, 1003, 1004; (*Division*, 1003); Mr. H. E. Kearley (*Amendt.*) 1003; Mr. T. C. T. Warner, 1004; Mr. H. V. Duncombe, 1004; (*Divisions*, 1004) *Mar* 18
- In. Com., [Chairman, 1128, 1139, 1140, 1144, 1145, 1146, 1148;] Mr. T. Lough, (*Amendt.*) 1128, 1129, (*Amendt.*) 1130, 1131, 1133, 1134, 1136, 1137, [*New Clause*] 1137, 1138, 1139, 1144; Mr. Brodrick, 1129, 1138, 1140, 1142, 1143, 1147, 1149; (*Amendt. negatived*, 1129); Mr. Vesey Knox, (*Amendt.*) 1129, 1130; Sir M. Hicks Beach, 1130, 1131. 1132, 1133, 1135, 1136, 1137; Mr. J. A. Pease, 1130, 1132; (*Amendt. negatived*, 1130); Mr. D. F. Goddard, 1131; Sir C. Dilke, 1132, 1148; (*Division*, 1133); Mr. J. Caldwell, 1133, 1135, 1136, 1140, 1146; Mr. J. H. Lewis, 1134, 1143, 1147; (*Division*, 1136); [*Division*, *Clause negatived*, 1138;] Mr. J. P. Farrell, 1139, 1140, 1141; Mr. J. H. Dalziel, 1140, 1143, 1148; Mr. Munro Ferguson, 1140; Sir J. Colomb, 1141, 1142, 1143, 1145; Mr. J. Colville, 1141; Mr. Powell-Williams, 1141, 1142; General Laurie, 1145; Mr. W. Allan, 1145; Mr. Hedderwick, 1146; Sir J. Fergusson, 1147; Colonel Welby, 1147; Mr. J. Dillon, 1147; Mr. C. Bill, 1149; (*Division*, 1149). Preamble Agreed to, 1149 *Mar* 22
- Rep. without Amendt. *Mar* 22, 1149

MILWARD, Colonel VICTOR, *Warwickshire, Stratford-on-Avon*
- Clerical Incomes (Taxation) *Mar* 9, 277; *Mar* 23, 1213
- Education Code (1897) Teachers *Mar* 11, 498
- Land Tax *Mar* 19, 1021
- Voluntary Schools Bill, In Com. *Mar* 10, 414; *Mar* 17, 859, 863

MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS

Adulteration, Food Products, *Qs.* Mr. H. E. Kearley; *As.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 9, 305. *Qs.* Mr. A. F. Jeffreys, Sir J. Leng, Mr. F. A. Channing; *As.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 25, 1325

Bequest to Nation by Lady Wallace, *Q.* Mr. Massey-Mainwaring; *A.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 26, 1441

Certificates of Marriage, *Q.* Mr. J. C. Williams; *A.* Mr. Graham Murray *Mar* 25, 1300

Checkweigher, *Coal Mines Regulation Act 1887*, *Q.* Mr. B. Pickard; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 11, 504. *Q.* Mr. S. Woods; *A.* Sir R. Webster *Mar* 16, 763

Clerical Incomes (Taxation) (see that Title)

Contraband Tobacco, *Qs.* Captain Norton: *As.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 8, 194; *Mar* 15, 664; *Mar* 22, 1111

Experiments on Living Animals, *Qs.* Mr. Swift MacNeill; *As.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 12, 563; *Mar* 23, 1180

Food Products, *Adulteration*, *Qs.* Mr. H. E. Kearley; *As.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 9, 305. *Qs.* Mr. A. F. Jeffreys, Sir J. Leng, Mr. F. A. Channing; *As.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 25, 1325

Foreign Orders, *Qs.* Mr. Swift MacNeill; *As.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1573

Gambling in Options and Futures, *Qs.* Mr. W. Field; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 8, 187; *Mar* 12, 568

Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Q.* Mr. Stanley Leighton; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 18, 916

Horse
- *Breeding*, *Q.* Mr. A. F. Jeffreys; *A.* Sir M. Hicks Beach *Mar* 25, 1300
- *Racing*, *Doncaster Town Moor*, *Q.* Sir J. T. Brunner; *A.* Mr. W. Long *Mar* 25, 1308

Importation of Foreign Manufactured Goods, *Qs.* Sir H. Vincent; *As.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 15, 681

Local Loans, *Qs.* Mr. Vesey Knox; *As.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 23, 1187

Local Loans Stock Bill, *Q.* Mr. P. A. M'Hugh; *A.* Sir M. Hicks Beach *Mar* 12, 565

Lord's Rent, Isle of Man, *Q.* Mr. J. A. Willox; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 11, 495

Message to the King of Greece, *Qs.* Mr. H. V. Duncombe, Mr. R. Pierpoint; *As.* Mr. A. J. Balfour; [Mr. Speaker;] *Mar* 5, 64

Mussel Beds
- *British Coasts*, *Q.* Mr. J. W. Crombie; *A.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 11, 506
- *List of*, *Q.* Mr. Orr-Ewing; *A.* Mr. Graham Murray *Mar* 18, 948

Ophthalmia Patients, *Qs.* Dr. Farquharson, Mr. A. J. Mundella; *As.* Mr. T. W. Russell *Mar* 19, 1022

Parish Council
- *Elections*, *Q.* Mr. J. H. C. Hozier; *A.* Mr. Graham Murray *Mar* 15, 654
- *Meeting, Poll*, *Q.* Mr. H. C. F. Luttrell; *A.* Mr. T. W. Russell *Mar* 19, 1036

Paris International Exhibition, *Qs.* Sir Stafford Northcote; *As.* Mr. Curzon, Sir M. Hicks Beach *Mar* 22, 1104

Printing and Stationery, *Q.* Mr. W. Field; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 8, 186

[*cont.*

MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS—cont.

Queen's
- *Reign, Diamond Jubilee* (see that Title)
- *Yacht, Victoria and Albert*, *Q.* Sir E. T. Gourley; *A.* Mr. G. J. Goschen *Mar* 18, 942

Rabies, *Q.* Dr. Farquharson; *A.* Mr. W. Long *Mar* 25, 1294

Reformatories for Inebriates, *Q.* Mr. H. Hobhouse; *A.* Sir Matthew White Ridley *Mar* 15, 663

Royal Patriotic Fund, *Q.* Mr. H. E. Kearley; *A.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 9, 305. *Qs.* Mr. H. E. Kearley; *As.* Mr. Brodrick *Mar* 18, 926

Salisbury Plain, *Q.* Mr. Allhusen; *A.* Mr. Powell-Williams *Mar* 12, 558

Wallace Collection, Bequest to Nation, *Q.* Mr. Massey-Mainwaring; *A.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 26, 1441

Wanstead Flats, *Q.* Mr. L. Sinclair; *A.* Mr. T. W. Russell *Mar* 12, 586

MONTAGU, Hon. JOHN SCOTT-, *Hants, New Forest*
- New Forest, Commoners' Pigs *Mar* 9, 278
- Voluntary Schools Bill, In Com. *Mar* 10, 411

MONTAGU, Sir SAMUEL, Bart., *Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel*
- Chelsea Water Bill, 2R. *Mar* 11, 462, 463

MORGAN, Mr. J. LLOYD, *Carmarthen, W.*
- Voluntary Schools Bill, In Com. *Mar* 15, 684

MORLEY, Right Hon. JOHN, *Montrose Burghs*
- Crete *Mar* 5, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144; *Mar* 18, 945, 946; *Mar* 25, 1311
- Evicted Farms, Meeting at Cahir *Mar* 9, 288
- Financial Relations, Great Britain and Ireland *Mar* 29, 1635
- Supply: £10,631,218 for Vote on Account *Mar* 26, 1510, 1513, 1518
- Voluntary School Bill, In Com. *Mar* 11, 525, 526; *Mar* 15, 702; *Mar* 16, 829; *Mar* 17, 861, 862; *Mar* 18, 1000, 1001; 3R. *Mar* 25, 1400, 1401, 1403, 1405

MORRELL, Mr. G. H., *Oxon, Woodstock*
- Friendly Societies *Mar* 18, 932
- Land Tax *Mar* 9, 289

MORRIS, Lord
- Financial Relations, Great Britain and Ireland *Mar* 5, 38
- Irish Judges and Military Guards, Ireland *Mar* 25, 1286, 1289, 1291

MORTON, Mr. E. J. C., *Devonport*
- Boiler Explosion, *H.M.S. Blake* *Mar* 11, 493
- Navy Estimates: 100,050 Men and Boys *Mar* 12, 618

MOWBRAY, Right Hon. Sir JOHN, Bart., *Oxford University*
- Universities of Oxford and Cambridge Act, 1877 *Mar* 26, 1528

MUNDELLA, Right Hon. A. J., *Sheffield, Brightside*
- Exports of Coal, Cinders, and Patent Fuel *Mar* 18, 938
- Ophthalmia Patients *Mar* 19, 1023
- Supply: £10,631,218 for Vote on Account *Mar* 26, 1476, 1478, 1481, 1482
- Voluntary Schools Bill, In Com. *Mar* 9, 314, 315, 318; *Mar* 16, 811; *Mar* 18, 956

MURNAGHAN, Mr. G., *Tyrone, Mid*
- Belfast Lunatic Asylum, Death of Inmate *Mar* 15, 677
- Irish Mail Service *Mar* 18, 936
- Land Sub-Commission, Omagh *Mar* 19, 1035
- Science and Art
  - Education, Ireland *Mar* 15, 667
  - Grant, Ireland *Mar* 29, 1570

MURRAY, RIGHT HON. A. GRAHAM (Lord Advocate), *Buteshire*
- Agricultural Rating Bill *Mar* 12, 570
- Certificates of Marriage *Mar* 25, 1301
- Danish Trawlers, Scottish Waters *Mar* 8, 203, 204
- Dundee Corporation Bill *Mar* 5, 46, 47
- Edinburgh University (Transfer of Patronage) Bill, Intro. *Mar* 22, 1168
- Elementary School Teachers, Scotland *Mar* 5, 59
- Embezzlement (Alleged) at Kilmarnock *Mar* 18, 925
- Highlands and Islands of Scotland, Congested Districts *Mar* 15, 681
- Illegal Fishing
  - Moray Firth *Mar* 23, 1193
  - Scotland *Mar* 11, 494
- Mussel Beds *Mar* 18, 948
- Parish Councils
  - Accounts, Scotland *Mar* 18, 949
  - Board Schools, and, Scotland *Mar* 16, 760
  - Elections, Scotland *Mar* 15, 655
- Piers and Boatslips, Scotland *Mar* 23, 1189
- Roads in Burghs, Scotland *Mar* 23, 1177
- Science and Art Department and Scotch Education Department *Mar* 9, 293
- Superannuation Allowances (Scotland) Bill, Intro. *Mar* 22, 1168

NAVY

First Lord—Mr. G. J. GOSCHEN
Secretary—Mr. W. G. E. MACARTNEY
Civil Lord—Mr. J. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN

- *Boilers*
  - *Explosion, H.M.S. Blake, Q.* Mr. E. J. C. Morton; *A.* Mr. Austen Chamberlain *Mar* 11, 493. *Q.* Captain Donelan; *A.* Mr. Austen Chamberlain *Mar* 16, 755
  - *Tubular, H.M.S. Powerful, Q.* Sir A. Forwood; *A.* Mr. G. J. Goschen *Mar* 5, 56
- *Channel Fleet, Q.* Sir L. Lyell; *A.* Mr. G. J. Goschen *Mar* 25, 1315

[*cont.*

NAVY—cont.
- *Coaling Station, Lough Swilly, Q.* Mr. T. B. Curran; *A.* Mr. G. J. Goschen *Mar* 18, 939
- *Coopers, Qs.* Sir J. Haslett, Mr. Arnold-Forster; *As.* Mr. Macartney *Mar* 12, 555
- *Dockyards*
  - *Haulbowline, Q.* Captain Donelan; *A.* Mr. Austen Chamberlain *Mar* 22, 1118
  - *Jamaica (Port Royal), Qs.* Mr. Gibson Bowles; *As.* Mr. Austen Chamberlain *Mar* 23, 1176
  - *Officers' Pay, Q.* Mr. W. T. Howell; *A.* Mr. Macartney *Mar* 12, 569
- *Engineer Officers, Q.* Mr. J. Penn; *A.* Mr. Macartney *Mar* 11, 490
- *Haulbowline Dockyard, Q.* Captain Donelan; *A.* Mr. Austen Chamberlain *Mar* 22, 1118
- *H.M.S.*
  - *Blake, Boiler Explosion, Q.* Mr. E. J. C. Morton; *A.* Mr. Austen Chamberlain *Mar* 11, 493. *Q.* Captain Donelan; *A.* Mr. Austen Chamberlain *Mar* 16, 755
  - *Powerful, Tubular Boilers, Q.* Sir A. Forwood: *A.* Mr. G. J. Goschen *Mar* 5, 56
- *Hospitals, Q.* Sir J. Colomb; *A.* Mr. G. J. Goschen *Mar* 26, 1435
- *Interpreters, Qs.* Mr. J. W. Crombie, Mr. Gibson Bowles; *As.* Mr. G. J. Goschen *Mar* 25, 1305. *Qs.* Captain Pirie, Captain Donelan, Mr. Gibson Bowles; *As.* Mr. G. J. Goschen *Mar* 26, 1439
- *Jamaica (Port Royal) Dockyard, Qs.* Mr. Gibson Bowles; *As.* Mr. Austen Chamberlain *Mar* 23, 1176
- *Marine*
  - *Force in Naval Bases, Q.* Sir J. Colomb: *A.* Mr. G. J. Goschen *Mar* 11, 491
  - *Garrison in Naval Bases* (see that Title)
  - *Royal Artillery, Qs.* Sir J. Colomb; *As.* Mr. G. J. Goschen *Mar* 5, 60
- *Ordnance Store Department, Q.* Mr. H. C. F. Luttrell; *A.* Mr. G. J. Goschen *Mar* 11, 483
- *Queen's*
  - *Reign, Crimean Veterans, Qs.* Captain Norton, Sir J. Leng; *As.* Mr. Brodrick, Mr. G. J. Goschen *Mar* 18, 923
  - *Yacht, Victoria and Albert, Q.* Sir E. T. Gourley; *A.* Mr. G. J. Goschen *Mar* 18, 942
- *Royal*
  - *Marine Artillery, Qs.* Sir J. Colomb; *As.* Mr. G. J. Goschen *Mar* 5, 60
  - *Naval Reserve, Q.* Mr. Arnold-Forster; *A.* Mr. G. J. Goschen *Mar* 12, 569
- *Ships in Construction, Qs.* Mr. J. J. Clancy, Mr. Rees Davies; *As.* Mr. G. J. Goschen *Mar* 12, 571
- *Strength of the Navy* (see that Title)
- *Torpedo Boats, Q.* Mr. W. Allan; *A.* Mr. Macartney *Mar* 18, 948
- *Tubular Boilers, H.M.S. Powerful, Q.* Sir A. Forwood; *A.* Mr. G. J. Goschen *Mar* 5, 56

NAVY ESTIMATES 1897-98

£60,300 for Additional Naval Force in Australasian Waters
- In Com., Sir C. Dilke, 1076; Mr. G. J. Goschen, 1076. Vote Agreed to, 1076 *Mar* 19. Report *Mar* 22, 1165

[*cont.*

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1897-98—cont.

£243,600 for Admiralty Office Expenses
In Com., Vote Agreed to *Mar* 19, 1076
Report: Mr. J. H. Dalziel, 1164; [Mr. Speaker, 1165;] Mr. G. J. Goschen, 1165 *Mar* 22
Reso. Agreed to *Mar* 22, 1165

£2,675,000 for Armaments
In Com., Captain Phillpotts, 1075; Mr. Macartney, 1075. Vote Agreed to, 1076 *Mar* 19. Report *Mar* 22, 1163

£327,400 for Civil Pensions and Gratuities
In Com., Vote Agreed to *Mar* 19, 1076. Report *Mar* 22, 1165

£749,500 for Half-pay, Reserved and Retired Pay
In Com., Vote Agreed to *Mar* 19, 1076. Report *Mar* 22, 1165

£10,600 for Martial Law, etc.
In Com., Sir E. T. Gourley, 1062; Mr. Macartney, 1063; Mr. C. Harrison, 1063; Mr. G. J. Goschen, 1064; Mr. H. E. Kearley, 1064. Vote Agreed to, 1064 *Mar* 19. Report *Mar* 22, 1163

£161,400 for Medical Services and Establishments
In Com., Vote Agreed to *Mar* 19, 1062. Report *Mar* 22, 1163

100,050 Men and Boys
In Com., Sir C. Dilke, 581, 599, 600, 624, 634; Mr. G. J. Goschen, 581, 585, 589, 598, 599, 623, 634, 640, 643, 644, 645; Admiral Field, 581, 584; Mr. Macartney, 584, 628, 629, 630, 631, 635; Mr. E. Robertson, 584, 586, 634; Mr. E. Lawrence, 586; [Chairman, 586, 645;] Captain Bethell, 598; Mr. Gibson Bowles, 600, 620, 623, 624, 635, 636; Captain Phillpotts, 603; Mr. W. Allan, 606; Mr. J. Penn, 609; Mr. J. F. Flannery, 611; Mr. H. E. Kearley, 616, 629, 630; Earl of Dalkeith, 618; Mr. E. J. C. Morton, 618; Mr. J. H. Wilson, 624, 631, 635, 636; General Laurie, 636, 638; Mr. J. Samuel, 638; Sir J. Colomb, 638, 640; Mr. T. Lough, 640, 643; Mr. J. Gilhooly, 643; Captain Pirie, 644; Mr. P. A. M'Hugh, 645; Dr. Tanner, 645 *Mar* 12. Report *Mar* 15, 741

£195,400 for Miscellaneous Effective Services
In Com., Vote Agreed to *Mar* 19, 1076. Report *Mar* 22, 1163

[*cont.*

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1897-98—cont.

£1,053,200 for Naval and Marine Pensions, Gratuities, and Compassionate Allowances
In Com., Vote Agreed to *Mar* 19, 1076. Report *Mar* 22, 1165

£249,900 for Royal Naval Reserves
In Com., Sir C. Dilke, 1064; Mr. Gibson Bowles, 1065; Mr. G. J. Goschen, 1065, 1068; Mr. W. Allan, 1067, 1068, 1075; Mr. R. G. Webster, 1069; Captain Phillpotts, 1070; Sir E. T. Gourley, 1070; Captain Bethell, 1072; Mr. J. Penn, 1073; General Laurie, 1073; Mr. J. C. Macdona, 1074; Mr. Macartney, 1074, 1075. Vote Agreed to *Mar* 19. Report *Mar* 22, 1163

£1,384,600 for Victualling and Clothing
In Com., Mr. H. E. Kearley, 1059; Mr. G. J. Goschen, 1060; Mr. Gibson Bowles, 1062; Sir E. T. Gourley, 1062. Vote Agreed to 1062 *Mar* 19. Report *Mar* 22, 1163

£4,696,000 for Wages, etc.
In Com., Mr. E. Robertson, 1038, 1039, 1046; [Chairman, 1038, 1039, 1053, 1054, 1057;] Mr. J. Dillon, 1040, 1041, 1043, 1047, 1048, 1049; Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett, 1041, 1052; Admiral Field, 1042; Mr. G. J. Goschen, 1042, 1043, 1044, 1046, 1054, 1055; Mr. H. Labouchere, 1044; Captain Bethell, 1045; Mr. J. H. Dalziel, 1045; Mr. Gibson Bowles, 1047, 1050, 1056; Mr. J. Lowther, 1048, 1049; Mr. J. C. Flynn, 1049, 1050; Mr. T. W. Legh, 1050; Mr. T. P. O'Connor, 1050, 1051; Lord H. Cecil, 1051; Mr. T. Lough, (*Amendt.*) 1053, 1054, 1056; Sir C. Dilke, 1054, 1055; (*Amendt. withdrawn*, 1056); Sir J. Baker, 1056, 1057; Mr. Macartney, 1057. Vote Agreed to *Mar* 19. Report *Mar* 22, 1163

£648,800 for Works, Buildings, and Repairs
In Com., Vote Agreed to *Mar* 19, 1059. Report *Mar* 22, 1163

Navy, Strength of (see Title STRENGTH OF THE NAVY)

New River Water (Purchase) Bill
c. Withdrawn *Mar* 11, 482

NICOL, Mr. DONALD N., *Argyllshire*
Highlands and Islands of Scotland, Congested Districts *Mar* 15, 681
Scotch Mail Service *Mar* 22, 1106

NORTHCOTE, Hon. Sir STAFFORD, Bart., *Exeter*
Paris International Exhibition *Mar* 22, 1104

NORTON, Captain C. W., *Newington, W.*
- Army
  - Clothing Department *Mar* 25, 1304
  - Medical Staff *Mar* 29, 1553
  - Special Campaign Pension *Mar* 18, 923
- British Troops in India, Health of *Mar* 18, 940
- City of London (Inclusion of Southwark) Bill, 2R. *Mar* 22, 1091
- Contraband Tobacco *Mar* 8, 194; *Mar* 15, 664; *Mar* 22, 1111
- Crete *Mar* 25, 1312
- Great Northern Railway Bill *Mar* 8, 165
- Law Courts, Injury to Workmen *Mar* 25, 1306
- Metropolitan Police
  - Boot
    - Contract *Mar* 8, 194; *Mar* 15, 671
    - Money *Mar* 22, 1105; *Mar* 29, 1569
  - Hackney Carriage Department *Mar* 18, 941
- Ordnance Factories, Superannuation *Mar* 15, 665
- Queen's Reign, Crimean Veterans *Mar* 18, 923
- Scotland Yard, Cab Drivers *Mar* 25, 1324
- Woolwich Arsenal, Wages *Mar* 15, 665
- Wreck, Indian Troopship *Warren Hastings* *Mar* 15, 664

NUSSEY, Mr. T. W., *Pontefract*
- Voluntary Schools Bill, In Com. *Mar* 9, 308; *Mar* 16, 823, 835, 839

O'BRIEN, Mr. J. F. X., *Cork City*
- Post Office Establishments *Mar* 29, 1561

O'BRIEN, Mr. PATRICK, *Kilkenny City*
- Burgess Roll, Kilkenny *Mar* 23, 1192, 1193
- County Court
  - Judgeship, Down *Mar* 12, 572; *Mar* 15, 679; *Mar* 16, 756, 757
  - Judges, Ireland *Mar* 11, 502, 503
- Daunt's Rock Lightship *Mar* 9, 297
- Financial Relations, Great Britain and Ireland *Mar* 29, 1649
- Labourers' Cottages, Callan Board of Guardians *Mar* 29, 1563
- Lough Swilly Railway Company *Mar* 9, 296
- National Board, Ireland *Mar* 18, 930

O'BRIEN, Mr. P. J., *Tipperary, N.*
- Irish Mail Service *Mar* 22, 1115; *Mar* 26, 1436

Occupiers' Dwellings Bill
- *l.* Pres., Viscount de Vesci: Read 1ª *Mar* 29, 1529

O'CONNOR, Mr. ARTHUR, *Donegal, E.*
- Army Clothing Department *Mar* 25, 1305
- Convicts under Sentence *Mar* 15, 659
- Crete *Mar* 25, 1311
- Labourers' Dwellings, Longford *Mar* 8, 206
- Postal Facilities, Queen's County *Mar* 29, 1547
- Voluntary Schools Bill, In Com. *Mar* 15, 740

O'CONNOR, Mr. JAMES, *Wicklow, W.*
- School Attendance Committees, Ireland *Mar* 29, 1569
- Supply: £10,631,218 for Vote on Account *Mar* 26, 1500, 1501

O'CONNOR, Mr. T. P., *Liverpool, Scotland*
- Crete *Mar* 22, 1119
- Massacre at Tokat *Mar* 25, 1321
- Navy Estimates: £4,696,000 for Wages, etc. *Mar* 19, 1050, 1051
- Presence of Foreign Representative at Public Meeting *Mar* 15, 672
- Voluntary Schools Bill, In Com. *Mar* 11, 517

O'KELLY, Mr. JAMES, *Roscommon, N.*
- Army Pensioner: Hanley (Patrick) *Mar* 8, 196
- Suck Drainage Award *Mar* 8, 185

OLDROYD, Mr. MARK, *Dewsbury*
- Voluntary Schools Bill, In Com. *Mar* 16, 849, 850

O'MALLEY, Mr. W., *Galway, Connemara*
- Paupers, Galway *Mar* 16, 750
- Processes for Rent, Galway *Mar* 16, 749

ONSLOW, EARL OF (Under Secretary of State for India)
- Indian Famine, Mansion House Fund *Mar* 11, 431, 432
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American Mails, *Q.* Sir J. Leng; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 15, 656
Bogeskey Post Office, Cavan, *Q.* Mr. S. Young; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 25, 1299
Bogus Telegrams, Ireland, Alleged, *Q.* Mr. Vesey Knox; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 23, 1187
Cable Companies, Tariff of Charges, *Q.* Mr. Henniker Heaton; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 15, 653
Clonmel Post Office, *Q.* Mr. T. J. Condon; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 18, 935
Colonial and Foreign Letters, Reply Postage, *Q.* Mr. Henniker Heaton; *A.* Mr Hanbury *Mar* 11, 490
Cork Post Office, *Q.* Mr. M. Healy; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 12, 572. *Q.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 25, 1308
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Colonial and Foreign, Reply Postage, *Q.* Mr. Henniker Heaton; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 11, 490
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Littleport, Cambridgeshire, *Q.* Mr. C. T. Giles; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 11, 494
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Longford, Post Office, Moate-Farrell, *Q.* Mr. J. P. Farrell; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 8, 202
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Norwood-under-Southall Postal District, *Q.* Mr. J. Bigwood; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 18, 940
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Post, Live Bees, *Qs.* Sir H. Vincent; *As.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 15, 652
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Rasch, Major F. C., *Essex, S.E.*
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Redmond, Mr. J. E., *Waterford City*
Financial Relations, Great Britain and Ireland *Mar* 29, 1598

Regular and Elders' Widows' Funds Bill
c. Intro., Lord G. Hamilton; Read 1° *Mar* 29, 1577

Reid, Sir R. T., *Dumfries District*
Court of Criminal Appeal Bill, 2R. *Mar* 24, 1242, 1251, 1266
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Renshaw, Mr. C. B., *Renfrewshire*
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Reserve and Discharged Soldiers
Mr. A. M. Brookfield, (*Notice of Motion*) *Mar* 16, 746

Restraint of Evictions (London) Bill
c. Intro., Mr. H. H. Marks; Read 1° *Mar* 26, 1443

Retirement of Vestrymen and Auditors (London) Bill
l. Read 3ª *Mar* 12, 554

RIDLEY, Right Hon. Sir MATTHEW WHITE, Bart. (Secretary of State for the Home Department), *Lancashire, N., Blackpool*
Aldershot Military Prison *Mar* 16, 749
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- Convict Prison
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  - Physical Drill *Mar* 19, 1020
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Roberts, Mr. J. Bryn, *Carnarvonshire, Eifion*

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Roberts, Mr. J. Herbert, *Denbigh, W.*

- Christian Churches in India *Mar* 22, 1115
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Robertson, Mr. Edmund, *Dundee*

- Dundee Corporation Bill *Mar* 5, 46
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Robson, Mr. W. S., *South Shields*

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Roche, Hon. James B. B., *Kerry, E.*

- Assizes, Ireland *Mar* 15, 657
- Shannon Salmon Fishery *Mar* 8, 206
- Wreck, Indian Troopship *Warren Hasting Mar* 11, 493

Roche, Mr. John, *Galway, E.*

- Clanricarde Estate, Galway *Mar* 22, 1122
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  Financial Relations Between Great Britain and Ireland (see that Title)
  Financial Relations Commission, Ireland (see that Title)
  Historical Manuscripts (see MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS)
  Irish Land (see IRELAND)
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Rules of the Road at Sea
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  Isle of Man (Church Buildings Acts) Bill, 2R. *Mar* 18, 889
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SAMUEL, Mr. J., *Stockton-on-Tees*
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SAUNDERSON, Colonel E. J., *Armagh, N.*
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SAVORY, Sir JOSEPH, Bart., *Westmorland, Appleby*
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Schools
  Accommodation, Heywood, Q. Mr. J. C. Williams; *A.* Sir J. Gorst *Mar* 15, 669
  Attendance Committees, Ireland, Q. Mr. J. O'Connor; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1569
  Board
    Election, Counting Voting Papers, Q. Mr. J. Brigg; *A.* Sir J. Gorst *Mar* 25, 1318
    London, Q. Mr. W. E. T. Sharpe; *A.* Sir J. Gorst *Mar* 18, 919
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    Teachers, Scotland, Qs. Mr. J. W. Crombie; *As.* Mr. Graham Murray *Mar* 5, 58
  Fermanagh Estate, Qs. Mr. P. C. Doogan; *As.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 12, 567; *Mar* 15, 659
  Industrial, Ireland, Q. Mr. R. McGhee; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1551
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    Model Department, Q. Mr. T. M. Healy; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour *Mar* 29, 1537
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  Necessitous Board Schools Bill, Q. Mr. J. H. Roberts; *A.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 23, 1193
  Roxborough, Limerick, Q. Mr. T. M. Healy; *A.* Mr. J. Atkinson *Mar* 29, 1539
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  - *Scheme of Allotment, Q.* Mr. H. Hobhouse; *A.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 18, 950
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SCHWANN, Mr. C. E., *Manchester, N.*
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  - Appointment and Promotion Bill, Intro. *Mar* 23, 1194
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SCOBLE, Sir A. R., *Hackney, Central*
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Secretary for—Lord BALFOUR
Lord Advocate—Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY
Solicitor General—Mr. C. SCOTT DICKSON

- *Agricultural Rating Bill, Qs.* Mr. J. McLeod, Mr. Hedderwick; *As.* Mr. Graham Murray *Mar* 12, 570
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- *Certificates of Marriage, Q.* Mr. J. C. Williams; *A.* Mr. Graham Murray *Mar* 25, 1300
- *Channel Fleet, Q.* Sir L. Lyell; *A.* Mr. G. J. Goschen *Mar* 25, 1315
- *Danish Trawlers in Scotch Waters, Qs.* Marquess of Huntly; *As.* Lord Balfour *Mar* 8, 145. *Qs.* Mr. J. E. Gordon, Captain Pirie, Sir W. Wedderburn, Mr. Gibson Bowles; *As.* Mr. Graham Murray *Mar* 8, 203. *Qs.* Captain Pirie; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 9, 303. *Qs.* Mr. C. H. Wilson, Captain Pirie; *As.* Mr Ritchie *Mar* 11, 499
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- *Mussel Beds, Q.* Mr. Orr-Ewing; *A.* Mr. Graham Murray *Mar* 18, 948
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  - *Accounts, Q.* Mr. R. Souttar; *A.* Mr. Graham Murray *Mar* 18, 949
  - *Board Schools and, Q.* Mr. J. Colville; *A.* Mr. Graham Murray *Mar* 16, 761
  - *Elections, Q.* Mr. J. H. C. Hozier; *A.* Mr. Graham Murray *Mar* 15, 654
- *Piers and Boatslips, Qs.* Mr. J. McLeod; *As.* Mr. Graham Murray *Mar* 23, 1189
- *Prison Service, Qs.* Mr. Orr-Ewing; *As.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 25, 1297
- *Public Health (Scotland) Bill* (see that Title)
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- *Rifle Volunteers, 1st Sutherland Highland, Q.* Mr. Hedderwick; *A.* Mr. Brodrick *Mar* 15, 670
- *Roads in Burghs, Q.* Mr. T. H. Cochrane; *A.* Mr. Graham Murray *Mar* 23, 1177
- *Science and Art Department and Scotch Education Department, Q.* Mr. C. B. Renshaw; *A.* Mr. Graham Murray *Mar* 9, 293
- *Scottish Prison Service, Qs.* Mr. Orr-Ewing; *As.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 25, 1297
- *Supply: Scottish Estimates, Qs.* Mr. J. McLeod; *As.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 22, 1126
- *Telegraph Facilities, Govan, Q.* Mr. J. Caldwell; *A.* Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 18, 924
- *Tunnel, Ireland and, Q.* Mr. Arnold-Forster; *A.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 22, 1125
- *Volunteers, Rifle, 1st Sutherland Highland, Q.* Mr. Hedderwick; *A.* Mr. Brodrick *Mar* 15, 670

SCOTT, Mr. C. P., *Lancashire, S.W., Leigh*
- Voluntary Schools Bill, In Com. *Mar* 10, 421; *Mar* 15, 735; *Mar* 16, 789, 791, 827; *Mar* 18, 956, 966, 967; 3R. *Mar* 25, 1394

SCOTT-MONTAGU, Hon. J. (see MONTAGU)

SETON-KARR, Mr. H., *St. Helen's*
- Food Supplies, United Kingdom *Mar* 9, 276
- London Parks, Cycling Tracks *Mar* 15, 661

SHARPE, Mr. W. E. T., *Kensington, N.*
- Board Schools
  - London *Mar* 18, 919
  - Specific Subjects *Mar* 23, 1172
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SHAW, Mr. CHARLES E., *Stafford*
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SHAW, Mr. THOMAS, *Hawick Burghs*
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SHEE, Mr. J. J., *Waterford, W.*
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Shipwrecks
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Angloman, Fog Signals, Q. Sir A. B. Forwood; *A.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 5, 55
City of Agra, Q. Mr. J. Havelock Wilson; *A.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 19, 1029
Warren Hastings, Indian Troopship, Q. Captain Chaloner; *A.* Mr. Brodrick *Mar* 8, 205. *Qs.* Mr. James Roche, Mr. P. J. Power; *As.* Mr. Powell-Williams *Mar* 11, 493. *Q.* Captain Norton; *A.* Mr. Brodrick *Mar* 15, 664

SINCLAIR, Captain JOHN, *Forfarshire*
Dundee Corporation Bill *Mar* 5, 45, 47

SINCLAIR, Mr. LOUIS, *Essex, Romford*
Essex Regiment, 2nd Battalion *Mar* 12, 575
Wanstead Flats *Mar* 12, 568

SKEWES-COX, Mr. T., *Surrey, Kingston*
Hampton Court Park *Mar* 22, 1121

SMITH, Mr. SAMUEL, *Flintshire*
Madagascar *Mar* 23, 1171
Supply: £10,631,218 for Vote on Account *Mar* 26, 1468, 1476
Voluntary Schools Bill, In Com. *Mar* 11, 527, 528; *Mar* 18, 971

Southwark and Vauxhall Water Purchase Bill
c. Withdrawn *Mar* 11, 482

SOUTTAR, Mr. R., *Dumfries-shire*
Parish Council Accounts, Scotland *Mar* 18, 949

Speaker, Mr.
THE RIGHT HON.
WILLIAM COURT GULLY, Q.C.,
Carlisle

Questions
The right hon. Gentleman has said he does not propose to give any further answer. He is at liberty to refuse to give a further answer if he chooses to do so *Mar* 5, 60
The hon. Member seems to be under the impression that he can compel an answer. He has no right to compel any further answer if the right hon. Gentleman does not propose to give it *Mar* 5, 60

[*cont.*

SPEAKER, Mr.—cont.
Questions—cont.
It is obvious that the Question of the hon. Member has reference to the same matter which was the subject of the last Question. I must not be taken as expressing any opinion about the facts of that case, for I do not know what the facts are; but, in answer to the general Question, I may say that I certainly consider that it would be an abuse of the privilege granted to any gentleman representing the Press in the Lobby, if he were to use that opportunity for the purpose of soliciting from Members signatures to public petitions or addresses of any kind. Unless I am otherwise instructed by the House, I should deem it my duty to prevent anything of the sort taking place if it were brought to my notice *Mar* 5, 65
The hon. Member will not be in order in asking what is established by the Bluebook *Mar* 8, 199
The hon. Member brought that Question to the Table, and was there told that it was out of order. If he were not satisfied, he should have appealed to me *Mar* 23, 1184
The hon. Member is not asking for information, but whether he may be permitted to hand a document to the Home Secretary. Of course, he is permitted to hand it without asking leave *Mar* 23, 1185
That is so. And it would be quite out of order for a Committee, or for the tribunal which, in the case of an unopposed Bill, takes the place of a Committee, to deal with the matter after I had ruled it out of order *Mar* 23, 1193
The hon. Member is not in order in reading a letter from a newspaper, and asking whether the right hon. Gentleman's attention has been called to it. If the hon. Gentleman vouches for certain facts, he can ask a Question on them *Mar* 25, 1310
I think it would have been better if a word less capable of an offensive meaning had been used *Mar* 29, 1540
I cannot say that that Question properly arises out of the answer of the right hon Gentleman, and therefore notice of it should be given *Mar* 29, 1577

Rules and Order of Debate
The remarks of the hon. Gentleman are hardly pertinent to the question, which is whether it is desirable to remove the duty of protecting coaling stations from the Military to the Marines *Mar* 5, 133
That is a question which may have to be discussed before the Committee. It is not the question before the House now *Mar* 8, 171
The hon. Member is entering into details which are not justified by the question before the House *Mar* 8, 172
Certainly this is no question of order, as was pointed out by Mr. Speaker in the case of Mr. Ross in 1893 *Mar* 8, 252

[*cont.*

SPEAKER, Mr.—cont.

Rules and Order of Debate—cont.

If there be plenty of time, I would suggest to the hon. Member that it would be very inconvenient to the House to discuss the Rules without their being printed. It is very analogous to the case of a Bill which has not been printed before it comes on for Second Reading. It is impossible for an hon. Member who has not seen, and has had no opportunity of seeing, these Rules to understand them or to see the bearing of each particular Rule without reference to the context of the other Rules, and therefore I suggest to the hon. Member that it is for the convenience of the House, as well as for himself, that he should postpone the further discussion of this matter until the few days have elapsed in which the Rules may be in the hands of Members *Mar* 11, 540

do not quite know what is the position of Mr. O'Brien. I understand he is not a Judge of the High Court. I do not think that in anything he has said the right hon. and learned Gentleman has gone beyond the proper limits of Debate *Mar* 11, 546

The question before the House is not whether the Rules were laid on the Table at the proper time, but whether the specific Rules in question shall be annulled. *Mar* 11, 549

I have always understood that the suspension for half an hour was not an indulgence which was granted by the House to itself, but was in the nature of a concession to the natural infirmities of the occupant of the Chair, who would otherwise have to remain in his place for nine or ten consecutive hours. I have looked at the Debate which took place in 1888, and it does not appear to me that Mr. Smith was proposing in what he said to deal with exceptional cases such as may arise when the Chairman and the Speaker both obtain the necessary intermission without the operation of the half-hour's suspension. Therefore, it appears to me that when the Speaker and the Chairman both of them are in that position, either of them is justified in continuing the sitting without interruption of business unless he is otherwise ordered by the House. That I take to have been the practice, and I consider that to be still the practice, notwithstanding what passed in 1888. But there is another consideration to which I would call the attention of the House—namely, that the occasions when such a situation arises are extremely rare, and that when they do occur they probably cause inconvenience to some Members of the House by taking them by surprise. Therefore, though I have stated what I consider to be the practice which justifies the Speaker or the Chairman in continuing the sitting, I think it is desirable that some more fixed Rule should be acted on by the House. There is some difficulty in precisely fixing the Rule, because there are cases when I think the House would agree that it is desirable that the Chair should not be too closely pinned down. For example, sometimes the business before the House gets through with unexpected rapidity, so that by sitting on until half-past 9 or 10 o'clock, the whole of the business is disposed of without the Speaker or Chairman leaving the Chair at all. There must be freedom to the Chair to deal with cases of that kind, but, subject to that general supervision which the Chair exercises over the business of the House, I shall certainly make it my practice—one which will, I hope, meet with the general assent of the House—when the business of the House is going to last till 12 o'clock, to see that there is an interval of half an hour. In making that statement I must not be understood as saying a word in derogation of anything which has been done or held hitherto in this House. I have stated what I consider the practice has been up to this time, but I think more will be gained by laying down a more fixed Rule than is gained by saving perhaps half an hour in the course of a Session. I shall follow the practice I have suggested, reserving it to myself and to the Chairman on special occasions, such as I have mentioned, to regulate the business of the House in such a way as to meet the general convenience. *Mar* 12, 579

I have considered carefully this Bill, and I am of opinion that there is no case calling for interference on my part at this stage. The questions raised by the hon. Member are no doubt very important and worthy of the consideration of the House, but they are not matters which would justify me in refusing to submit the Bill for the consideration of the House on Second Reading. The main object of this Bill is to extend the boundaries of a borough, and that is a proper subject for a private Bill. No doubt in all such cases there are changes in local government, and the changes proposed by this Bill are perhaps more complicated and more numerous than usual; yet that does not justify me in interposing to prevent the House from expressing its opinion on the Second Reading. I therefore leave the matter to the consideration of the House *Mar* 22, 1078

I think that the Question of the franchise in the City of London is outside this Bill *Mar* 22, 1079

I have already proposed the Question that the House agree with the Committee. The hon. Member cannot move a reduction. He can vote against the Resolution *Mar* 22, 1165

I beg that hon. Members will not interrupt the right hon. Gentleman who is in possession of the House *Mar* 29, 1649

[*cont.*

SPEAKER, Mr.—cont.
Rules and Order of Debate—cont.
If the hon. Gentleman means to say that the right hon. Gentleman stated what he knows was not true, of course it would be entirely out of order; but I did not understand the hon. Gentleman to imply that *Mar* 29, 1661
If I knew the hon. Member who made use of that expression, I should call the attention of the House to his conduct *Mar* 29, 1667
The hon. Member must not use expressions of that kind in reference to an hon. Member sitting in this House *Mar* 29, 1672

Miscellaneous Rulings
Mar 5, 139; *Mar* 8, 164, 184, 267, 268; *Mar* 9, 305; *Mar* 11, 464, 479, 510; *Mar* 12, 575; *Mar* 15, 672, 673, 675, 676; *Mar* 16, 769, 773; *Mar* 22, 1121, 1152; *Mar* 25, 1312, 1320, 1321; *Mar* 26, 1437; *Mar* 29, 1558

SPENCER, Earl
Financial Relations, Great Britain and Ireland *Mar* 5, 41
Land Law (Ireland) Act 1881 *Mar* 18, 896, 909

SPICER, Mr. A., *Monmouth Boroughs*
Charity Commission *Mar* 16, 746
Voluntary Schools Bill, In Com. *Mar* 17, 865; *Mar* 18, 967

STANHOPE, Hon. P. J., *Burnley*
British South Africa, Instructions to Sir A. Milner *Mar* 29, 1555
South African League *Mar* 29, 1559
Supply: £10,631,218 for Vote on Account *Mar* 26, 1527; Report *Mar* 29, 1656

STANLEY, LORD (Lord Commissioner of the Treasury), *Lancashire, S.E., Westhoughton*
Business of the House *Mar* 18, 1008

STEPHENS, Mr. H. C., *Middlesex, Hornsey*
Muzzling Dogs *Mar* 11, 500

STEVENSON, Mr. F. S., *Suffolk, Eye*
Crete *Mar* 11, 513, 514; *Mar* 22, 1118; *Mar* 29, 1577
Massacre at Tokat *Mar* 25, 1319
Presence of Foreign Representative at Public Meeting *Mar* 15, 673
Reforms for Turkey *Mar* 18, 944

STIRLING-MAXWELL, Sir JOHN M., Bart., *Glasgow, College*
Customs, Assistants and Outdoor Officers *Mar* 9, 281

STRACHEY, Mr. EDWARD, *Somerset, S.*
Great Northern Railway Bill *Mar* 8, 169
Voluntary Schools Bill, In Com. *Mar* 8, 228; *Mar* 17, 869; *Mar* 18, 960, 962

STRAFFORD, Earl of
Army Head-dress *Mar* 8, 156

Strength of the Navy
On Motion, That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair: Sir C. Dilke, 65, 72, 83, 86, 93; Mr. G. J. Goschen, 72, 81, 83, 84, 86, 89, 90, 93, 98, 107, 108, 110, 111; Mr. E. Robertson, 89, 97, 98, 99; Captain Bethell, 89, 98, 99, 116; Mr. J. H. Wilson, 90, 113; Sir A. B. Forwood, 102, 103; Mr. Gibson Bowles, 103, 115, 116; Mr. H. E. Kearley, 106, 107, 108, 110, 111; Mr. R. G. Webster, 111; Sir J. Baker, 120 *Mar* 5

STUART, Mr. JAMES, *Shoreditch, Hoxton*
Chelsea Water Bill, 2R. *Mar* 11, 455, 457
City of London (Inclusion of Southwark) Bill, 2R. *Mar* 15, 650; *Mar* 22, 1103

STUART-WORTLEY, Right Hon. C. B. (see WORTLEY)

Superannuation Allowances (Scotland) Bill
c. Intro., Mr. Graham Murray; Read 1° *Mar* 22, 1168

SUPPLY
£263. 4s. 1d. for Excess 1895-96 for Mint, including Coinage
In Com., Vote Agreed to *Mar* 19, 1058. Report *Mar* 22, 1163

VOTE ON ACCOUNT, 1897-98

£10,631,218
In Com., Sir A. K. Rollit, (*Amendt.*) 1446, 1453, 1486; Mr. E. Flower, 1451, 1453, 1462; Mr. G. C. T. Bartley, 1451; [Chairman, 1451, 1486, 1501;] Sir W. Foster, 1454, 1459, 1463, 1465, 1486; Mr. A. F. Jeffreys, 1458, 1459; Sir C. Dilke, 1460, 1526; Mr. T. W. Russell, 1462, 1463, 1481, 1482; Sir H. Fowler, 1464; Mr. G. Drage, 1466; Mr. S. Smith, 1468, 1476; Mr. H. Chaplin, 1472, 1476; Mr. A. J. Mundella, 1476, 1478, 1481, 1482; Mr. B. L. Cohen, 1482; Mr. Atherley-Jones, 1483; (*Amendt. withdrawn*, 1486); Mr. J. C. Flynn, (*Amendt.*) 1486, 1495, 1496, 1527; Mr. T. C. T. Warner, 1486; Mr. M. Davitt, 1486, 1493, 1494, 1498, 1499; Sir R. Finlay, 1493, 1494: Mr. W. Johnston, 1496; Sir Matthew White Ridley, 1496, 1498, 1499, 1503; Mr. J. O'Connor, 1500, 1501; Mr. J. Dillon, 1502, 1503, 1507, 1508; Mr. P. J. Power, 1504; (*Division*, 1504); Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett, 1504, 1505, 1507, 1508, 1510, 1513; Sir R. T. Reid, 1505; Mr. J. Morley, 1510, 1513, 1518; Mr. A. J. Balfour, 1518, 1527, 1528; Mr. H. Labouchere, 1521, (*Amendt.*) 1523; Mr. Curzon, 1523; Mr. T. W. Legh, 1526; Mr. P. J. Stanhope, 1527; (*Divisions*, 1527, 1528). Reso. to be Rep. *Mar* 26

[*cont*,

SUPPLY—cont.

Vote on Account, 1897–98.—*cont.*

£10,631,218

Report: Mr. P. J. Stanhope, (*Motion*) 1656; Mr. A. J. Balfour, 1658, 1659, 1663; Mr. J. Bryce, 1659; Mr. J. Dillon, 1660, 1661, 1663, 1665, 1666; Mr. Curzon, 1661, 1664, 1665, 1666; [Mr. Speaker, 1661, 1667, 1672;] Sir R. T. Reid, 1667; Mr. J. Ellis, 1669; Sir C. Dilke, 1670; Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett, 1671, 1672; Mr. T. M. Healy, 1672, 1675; Mr. W. Allan, 1673; Mr. Arnold-Forster, 1673; Mr. R. Pierpoint, 1676; (*Division*, 1677). Reso. Agreed to *Mar* 29

Surveyors (County Dublin) Bill

c. Read 2° *Mar* 11, 538
In Com., Rep. without Amendt. *Mar* 12, 647
Read 3° and Passed *Mar* 12, 647
l. Read 1ª *Mar* 15, 649
Read 2ª and com. to Com. of Whole House *Mar* 18, 890
In Com., Rep. without Amendt.; Standing Com. negatived *Mar* 19, 1019
Read 3ª and Passed *Mar* 22, 1077
Royal Assent *Mar* 29, 1529

Talbot, Lord Edmund, *Sussex, Chichester*
Voluntary Schools Bill, In Com. *Mar* 15, 739

Tanner, Dr. C. K. D., *Cork, Mid*
Navy Estimates: 100,050 Men and Boys *Mar* 12, 645

Templetown, Viscount
Land Law (Ireland) Act 1881 *Mar* 18, 911, 912
Parliamentary Franchise (Women) Bill, 2R. *Mar* 8, 146

Thomas, Mr. Abel, *Carmarthenshire, E.*
Voluntary Schools Bill, In Com. *Mar* 8, 245; *Mar* 9, 372; *Mar* 11, 536

Thomas, Mr. Alfred, *Glamorgan, E.*
Voluntary Schools Bill, 3R. *Mar* 25, 1377

Thompson's Divorce Bill

l. Read 3ª and Passed *Mar* 5, 1
c. Read 1° *Mar* 8, 208
Read 2° *Mar* 15, 651
Rep. from Select Com. on Divorce Bills without Amendt. *Mar* 23, 1170
Read 3° and Passed without Amendt. *Mar* 26, 1430
l. Returned from Commons Agreed to *Mar* 29 1529

Tithe Redemption Bill

c. Intro, Mr. A. F. Jeffreys; Read 1° *Mar* 9, 306

Town Holdings (Tenants' Compensation) Bill

c. Intro., Mr. W. Hazell; Read 1° *Mar* 15, 743

TRADE, BOARD OF

President—Mr. C. T. Ritchie
Secretary—Earl of Dudley

Bills of Lading, *Q.* Mr. W. Field; *A.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 11, 505
Canal Navigation, *Qs.* Sir J. T. Brunner; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 25, 1317
Clogher Valley Tramway, *Q.* Mr. D. Macaleese; *A.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 12, 562
Collisions at Sea, Regulations for Preventing, *Q.* Mr. C. H. Wilson; *A.* Lord G. Hamilton; *Mar* 29, 1567
Cycles, Carriage by Rail, *Q.* Mr. W. Hazell; *A.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 25, 1295
Danish Trawlers in Scotch Waters, *Qs.* Captain Pirie; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 9, 303. *Qs.* Mr. C. H. Wilson, Captain Pirie; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 11, 499
Daunt's Rock Lightship, *Qs.* Mr. P. O'Brien, Mr. M. Austin, Mr. M. Healy; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 9, 297. *Qs.* Mr. M. Healy; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 11, 500
Electric Tram Speed, Ball's Bridge to Dalkey, Dublin, *Q.* Mr. W. Field; *A.* Lord G. Hamilton *Mar* 29, 1567
Engineering Trade Dispute, *Q.* Mr. E. Robertson; *A.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 18, 951
Fog Signals, s.s. Angloman, *Q.* Sir A. B. Forwood; *A.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 5, 55
Foreign
  Manufactured Goods, Importation of, *Q.* Sir H. Vincent; *A.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 15, 681
  States and British Colonies, Light Dues, *Qs.* Sir G. Baden-Powell; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 19, 1033
Gambling in Options and Futures, *Qs.* Mr. W. Field; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 8, 187; *Mar* 12, 568
Importation of Foreign Manufactured Goods, *Q.* Sir H. Vincent; *A.* Mr. A. J. Balfour *Mar* 15, 681
Ladies' Carriages, *Q.* Mr. J. Bigwood; *A.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 18, 931
Liberator Group of Companies, *Q.* Mr. R. B. Martin; *A.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 8, 191
Light Dues, Foreign States and British Colonies, *Qs.* Sir G. Baden-Powell; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 19, 1033
Mercantile Marine Fund, *Qs.* Sir G. Baden-Powell; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 5, 48
Penrhyn Quarries, *Q.* Mr. S. Woods; *A.* Lord G. Hamilton *Mar* 29, 1564
Railway
  Accidents, Coroners' Inquests, *Qs.* Mr. F. A. Channing; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 22, 1113; *Mar* 25, 1317
  Carriage of Cycles, *Q.* Mr. W. Hazell; *A.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 25, 1295
  Ladies' Carriages, *Q.* Mr J. Bigwood; *A.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 18, 931
  Trucks, Labelling, *Q.* Sir C. Dilke; *A.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 18, 927
  Waterford and Limerick, *Qs.* Mr. M. J. Flavin; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 12, 557

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- *Red Sea Lights, Qs.* Sir J. Fergusson; *As.* Mr. Curzon, Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 25, 1298
- *Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, Q.* Mr. C. H. Wilson; *A.* Lord G. Hamilton *Mar* 29, 1567
- *Royal National Lifeboat Institution, Select Committee, Qs.* Sir W. Houldsworth, Mr. C. E. Schwann, Sir R. U. Penrose Fitzgerald; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 23, 1185
- *Steamships*
  - *Angloman, Fog Signals, Q.* Sir A. B. Forwood; *A.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 5, 55
  - *City of Agra, Wreck of, Q.* Mr. J. Havelock Wilson; *A.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 19, 1029
  - *Osborn, Discharge of Crew, Q.* Mr. J. Havelock Wilson; *A.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 19, 1027
- *Waterford and Limerick Railway, Qs.* Mr. M. J. Flavin; *As.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 12, 557
- *Wreck of Steamship City of Agra, Q.* Mr. J. Havelock Wilson; *A.* Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 19, 1029

TREASURY
- First Lord—Mr. A. J. Balfour
- Patronage Secretary—Sir W. H. Walrond
- Financial Secretary—Mr. R. W. Hanbury
- Lords Commissioners—Mr. H. T. Anstruther; Mr. W. H. Fisher; Lord Stanley

Trout Fishing Close Time (Scotland) Bill
- *c.* Intro., Sir Herbert Maxwell; Read 1° *Mar* 12, 581

Trusts (Scotland) Bill
- *c.* In Com., Rep. as Amended *Mar* 8, 245. Considered as Amended *Mar* 15, 742

Tully, Mr. Jasper, *Leitrim, S.*
- County Courts and Sub-Sheriffs, Ireland *Mar* 26, 1440
- Mullingar Union, Outdoor Relief *Mar* 25, 1313
- Royal Irish Constabulary *Mar* 25, 1302; *Mar* 29, 1546

Universities of Oxford and Cambridge Act 1877
- Sir L. McIver, (*Motion for Address to Her Majesty*) 1528; Mr. J. Bryce, 1528; Sir J. Mowbray, 1528; (*Motion Agreed to,* 1528) *Mar* 26

Usborne, Mr. T., *Essex, Chelmsford*
- Clerical Incomes, Taxation *Mar* 23, 1205

Vincent, Colonel Sir C. E. Howard, *Sheffield, Central*
- Importation of Foreign Manufactured Goods *Mar* 15, 681
- Parcel
  - Post, Live Bees *Mar* 15, 652, 653
  - Traffic, England and America *Mar* 23, 1172, 1173

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Vincent, Colonel Sir C. E. Howard—*cont.*
- Volunteer
  - Battalions at Aldershot *Mar* 29, 1567
  - Officers, Winter School of Instruction *Mar* 15, 651

Voluntary Schools Bill
- *c.* In Com., Mr. Lloyd-George, (*Amendt.*) 209, 211, 216, 217; Sir R. B. Finlay, 211; Mr. H. H. Asquith, 212, 217; Mr. A. J. Balfour, 216, 217, 227, 234, 235, 236, 239; Mr. W. S. Robson, 218; Mr. R. Purvis, 219; Sir H. Fowler, 220; Viscount Cranborne, 221; Mr. J. M. Paulton, 222; Mr. E. Gray, 223; Mr. S. T. Evans, 223, 225, 234, 235; [Chairman, 225, 227, 228;] Mr. Sydney Buxton, 225, (*Amendt.*) 228, 230; Mr. F. A. Channing, 226, 227; (*Divisions,* 227); Mr. E. Strachey, 228; Sir R. Webster, 230, 234; Mr. H. Broadhurst, 231; Mr. H. S. Foster, 232; Mr. Humphreys-Owen, 233; Mr. G. C. T. Bartley, 233, 237; Mr. A. H. D. Acland, 233; Mr. J. C. Williams, 235; (*Divisions,* 235, 236); Mr. G. Lambert, (*Amendt.*) 236, 238; Sir W. Harcourt, 242; Mr. Abel Thomas, 245; R.P. *Mar* 8
- In Com., Debate Resumed on Mr. G. Lambert's Amendt.: Mr. T. W. Nussey, 308; Mr. R. W. Perks, 309; Mr. T. G. Ashton, 311; Mr. G. C. T. Bartley, 313, 314, 315; Mr. A. J. Mundella, 314, 315, 318; [Chairman, 318, 333, 334, 335;] Sir R. B. Finlay, 318, 330, 333, 372; Sir F. Lockwood, 319, 366; Sir W. Hart Dyke, 320; Mr. Ellis Griffith, 321; Lord H. Cecil, 322, 324; Mr. A. J. Balfour, 324, 327, 328, 329, 355, 362; Mr. J. Brigg, 324; Mr. E. Bainbridge, 325; Mr. A. H. D. Acland, 326, 334, 335; Mr. J. C. Williams, 327; (*Divisions,* 328;) Sir C. Dilke, (*Amendt.*) 328, 332; Mr. Sydney Buxton, 330, 334; Mr. R. McKenna, 330, 337; Sir J. Lubbock, 331; Mr. Humphreys-Owen, 331; Mr. T. Lough, 331, 361; Mr. F. A. Channing, 331, 335, 344; Mr. S. T. Evans, 331, 335; (*Amendt. negatived,* 332;) Sir A. K. Rollit, (*Amendt.*) 332, 333; (*Division,* 334;) Mr. J. A. Pease, 334; Mr. Lloyd-George (*Amendt.*) 335; Mr. H. Hobhouse, 339; Mr. H. Broadhurst, 343; Sir W. Harcourt, 350; Mr. J. H. Yoxall, 359; Mr. J. Bryce, 362; Mr. J. Chamberlain, 364; Mr. L. Courtney, 366; Mr. J. H. Roberts, 370; Viscount Cranborne, 371; Mr. Abel Thomas, 372; (*Division,* 373) *Mar* 9
- In Com., Mr. Ellis Griffith, (*Amendt.*) 382; Mr. A. J. Balfour, 385, 387, 390, 392, 395, 398, 402, 416, 418, 420, 426; Mr. A. H. D. Acland, 385, 387, 403, 419, 420; Mr. E. Gray, 388; Sir W. Harcourt, 390, 392; Mr. H. H. Asquith, 394; Captain Bethell, 395; Mr. E. H. Pickersgill, 396; Mr. R. W. Perks, 397; Mr. G. Lambert, 397, 398; Mr. J. C. Williams, 398; Mr. Gibson Bowles, 398; Mr. Sydney Buxton, 399, 411; Mr. B. L. Cohen, 399; Sir H. Fowler, 399, 403, 404, 424; Mr. S. T. Evans, 401, 413; (*Divisions,* 402); Mr. F. A. Channing, (*Amendt.*) 402, 404; [Chairman, 403, 404;]

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In Com., Mr. Lloyd-Morgan, (*Amendt.*) 684; [Chairman, 684, 716;] Mr. A. J. Balfour, 685, 691, 692, 696, 698, 701, 706, 707, 711, 715, 716, 726, 730, 731, 737; Mr. A. H. D. Acland, 686, 698, 699, 732, 733; Mr. J. H. Lewis, 686, 703, 715, 730; Sir J. Lubbock, 687; Mr. Brynmor Jones, 687, 707; Mr. D. Lloyd-George, 688; Mr. L. Courtney, 689, 709; Mr. Humphreys-Owen, 690, 714; Mr. J. H. Yoxall, 691, 697, 731; Mr. Ellis Griffith 691, 708, (*Amendt.*) 710; Mr. Sydney Buxton, 691, 692, 711; Mr. G. C. T. Bartley, 692, 703; Mr. S. T. Evans, 692, 709; Mr. H. Hobhouse, 693, 698; Mr. J. H. Roberts, 693; Mr. J. C. Williams, 694, 720; (*Division*, 694); Mr. R. W. Perks, (*Ament.*) 694, 713; Mr. R. C. Jebb, 700, 702; Mr. G. Lambert, 701; Mr. J. Morley, 702; Sir H. Fowler, 704, 707, 722, 723, 724, 729, 731; Sir R. B. Finlay 708, 709; Mr. J. W. Wilson, 708; Mr. J. M. Paulton, 709; (*Division*, 710); Mr. A. Birrell, 711; Mr. A. E. Hutton, 712; (*Divisions*. 715, 716); Mr. Bryn Roberts, 716; Mr. H. H. Asquith, (*Amendt.*) 716; Mr. H. Broadhurst, 719, 722; Mr. C. A. Cripps, 721, 722, 723, 724; Mr. Stuart-Wortley, 733; Mr. C. P. Scott, 735; Mr. C. Harrison, 737; (*Divisions*, 737, 738); Mr. J. Dillon, (*Amendt.*) 738; Talbot, 739; Mr. A. O'Connor, 740; R.P. *Mar* 15

In Com., Debate Resumed on Mr. Dillon's Amendt.: Mr. D. Lloyd-George, 784, 818, 824, 844; [Chairman, 784, 793, 839]; Mr. H. Hobhouse, 786, 787; Mr. A. J. Balfour, 787, 791, 792, 793, 796, 804, 811, 815, 822, 827, 828, 829, 830, 832, 833, 835, 840, 850, 851; Mr. R. McKenna, 788, 817, 826; Mr. J. A. Pease, 789, 822, 846; Mr. C. P. Scott, 789, 791, 827; Mr. R. W. Perks, 791, 808, 828; Mr. H. Broadhurst, 791, 819, 831;

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Under Secretary of State—Mr. Brodrick
Financial Secretary—Mr. J. Powell-Williams
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"As the hon. Member has raised the point of order, I may say that I do not think that the word "inspired" is of itself so unparliamentary or so offensive that it requires to be withdrawn. But if the hon. Gentleman chooses to make it the foundation of a charge he must either make the charge good or he must withdraw the expression." *Mar* 12, 586

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